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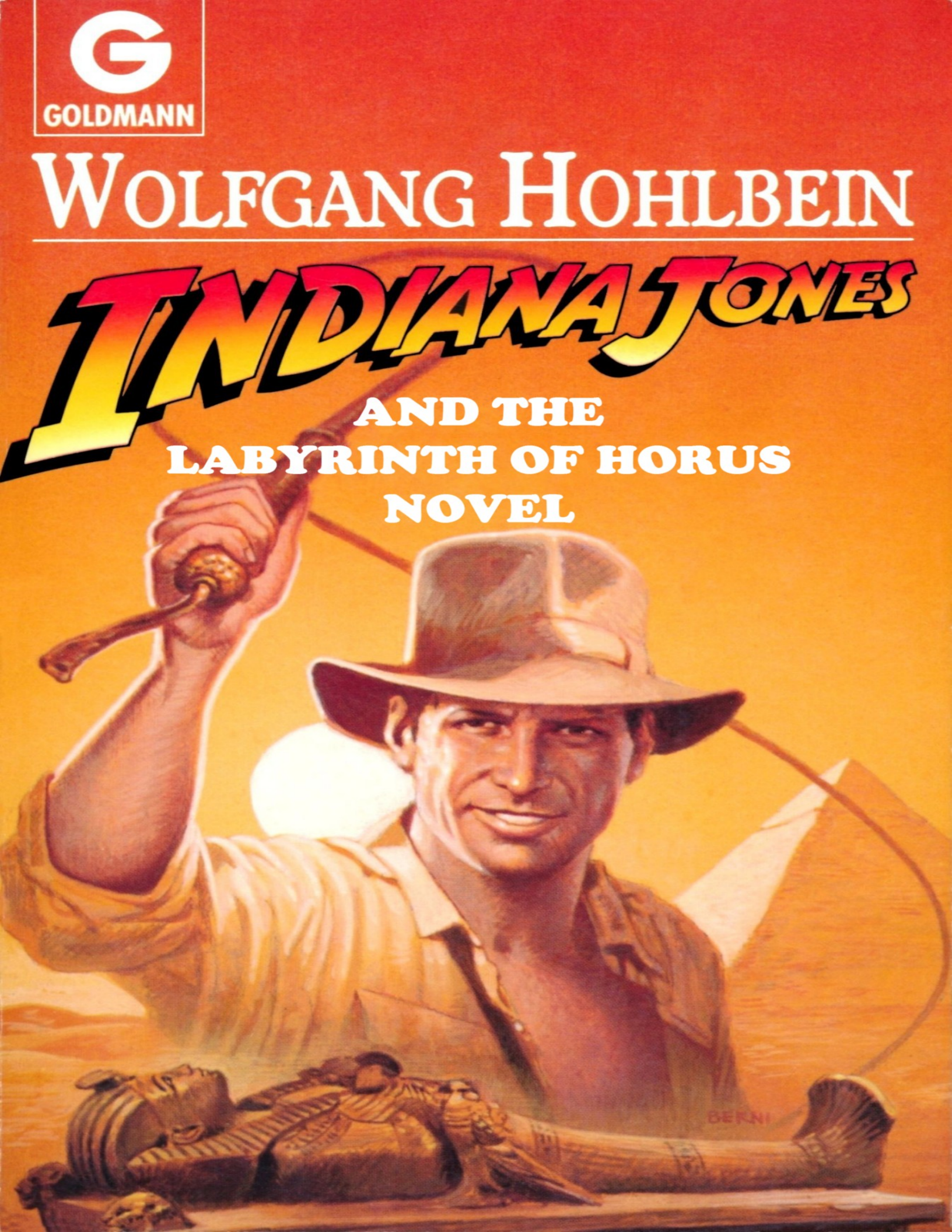
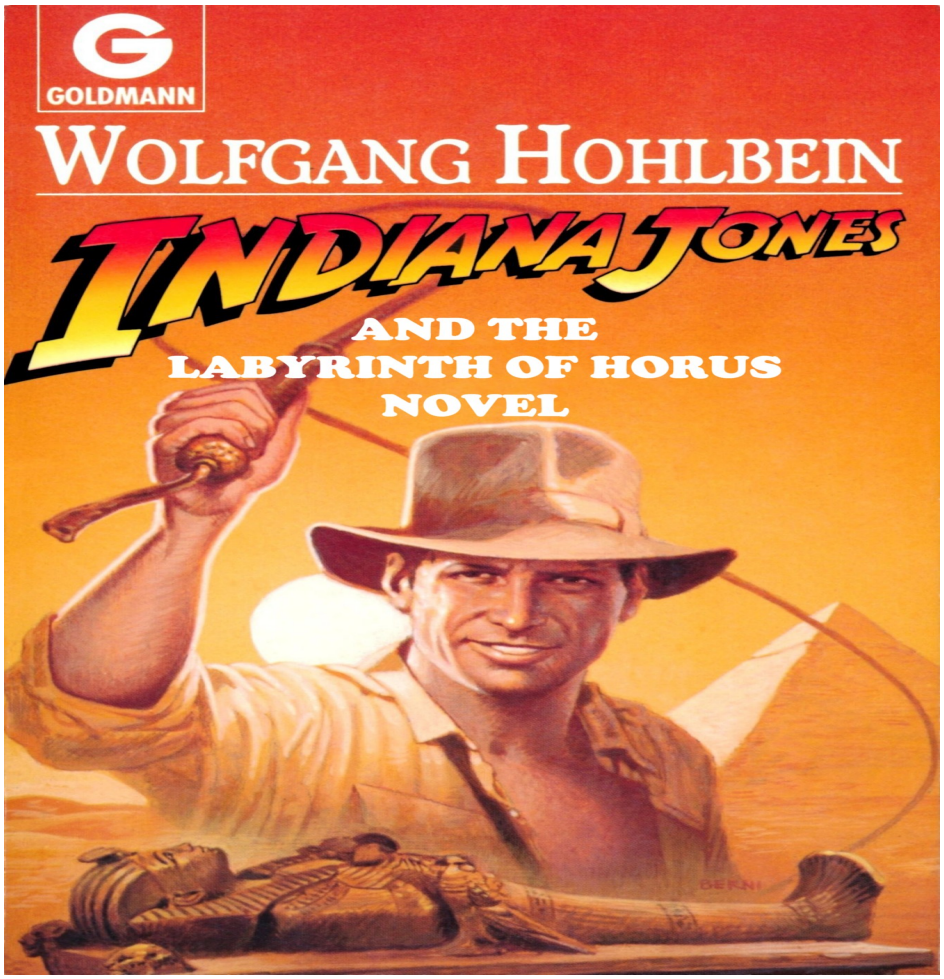
WOLFGANG HOHLBEIN

INDIANA JONES

AND THE LABYRINTH OF HORUS NOVEL

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INDIANA JONES™ and the LABYRINTH OF HORUS

by

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Translated by Icybro

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Casablanca, French Morocco
Early May 1941

The motley crowd of people who gathered in the streets of the city outskirts scattered in a panic, as the battered, old army truck crossed the border town, honking loudly as it pushed through the throngs. Dealers, pedestrians and beggars — including the lame and the blind, begging for alms with hands outstretched — fled at the sight of the approaching vehicle, and a look of horror could be seen on faces both outdoors and in. Mothers pulled their children close, poultry fluttered, camels ran away bleating without worrying about whether a rider sat atop them, and somehow everyone managed to find safety from the advancing fenders, though a desperate leap into a vegetable stand was occasionally required.

The truck sped on unabated. It knocked hand carts, boxes, and market stands aside and left a trail of devasta-tion and anger behind it. The path closed as fast as it had opened. No sooner had the people digested these horrors than they swarmed back onto the road, shaking clenched fists and hurling curses at the truck — and just seconds later, they sprung apart again, seeking the protection of in-doors for a second time. About two dozen mounted, saber-wielding

desert warriors chased the truck at a gallop, making their way forward in a no less ruthless fashion.

Indiana Jones, who sat at the wheel of the truck, threw a hurried look in the mirror and had to admit that the desert warriors were gaining on him. Here in the city, the horses were far superior to the truck in terms of maneu-verability and speed. It was just a matter of time before they caught up with him.

They had chased him for nearly two hours. He had hoped to lose them in the dusty trails that led out of the desert, but the decrepit roads, speckled with potholes, did not allow him the necessary speed. He didn't want to risk a broken axle, which would have meant certain death. He wondered if it had been the most murderous journey the worn-out truck had ever gone through. Indiana's hope that the pursuers' horses would eventually develop limps during their prolonged, sharp gallop had not come true.

Thanks to what must have been harsh training, the creatures could easily have run after him for another two hours.

Indiana cursed and beeped the horn even more vigorously to disperse the startled crowd in front of the hood.

His only chance was to reach the port — preferably before getting massacred. There, a passenger ship waited, with cabins reserved for him and a friend, with whom he had come to Morocco and who was now probably already on board. If he could make it there, he was safe. The crew and the harbor police would know how to stop a horde of rampaging desert warriors from storming the ship. If it was still in the harbor! Because at some point around this time, it was due to set out toward North America, and as misfortune now pursued him, he could bet that it was long gone. Actually, he had wanted to return to Casablanca much earlier, but in the last few hours not everything had gone as he had hoped — as the desert warriors breathing down his neck could attest. Indiana tightened his lips into a bloodless line. In his mind he saw the silhouette of the boat disappear low on the horizon. He didn't dare imagine what the desert warriors would do to him if it were true — or if he fell into their hands before then. They certainly knew a lot of ways to kill somebody, and how to make it an unpleasant and, above all, very slow ordeal.

Somehow, he even understood their anger. After all, there it was under his leather jacket, the *Face of the Goddess Mohk*, a gold death mask with eyes made of rubies as large as eggs. It was the greatest

relic of their tribe. Since they themselves possessed the mask through robbery —

generations ago, their ancestors had burned the desert city of Timbuktu and plundered its temple sites — Indiana had no qualms about taking it off their hands.

His eyes widened as a little girl on the street in front of him tripped and fell into the dust. Rather than jumping up and continuing on, she remained rooted to the spot and stared fearfully at the hood, her eyes capturing every moment.

He yanked the steering wheel and missed the girl by inches. The passenger side slammed into a house wall and scraped along the mud bricks for seconds, then — he wasn't sure how — he brought the vehicle back onto the roadway. Breathing heavily, he wiped the sweat from his brow, but quickly, so he could once again press his hand on the horn in the middle of the steering wheel. In the excitement, a few goats could not figure out what to do.

The piercing sound made it clear that *under no circumstances* could they remain where they were — namely, in the middle of the road.

Continuing on, the next obstacle lay just a few hundred yards down the road, less than half-a-honk away. A van, waiting for its barreled cargo to be unloaded, was parked across the road, blocking it completely. Some workers were about to carry the liquid product into a bar called "Rick's Café Americain." Recognizing that there was no getting past, Indiana stepped on the brake and clung to the steering wheel, so as not to fly forward into the windshield. The wheels locked and the truck spun, sliding in the dust toward the van, closer and closer, until it came to a stop seconds later. The wide-eyed stare of terrified workers proved that they had expected the worst just as much as Indy.

Only a foot more, and the cocktails and long drinks would have been mixed on a large scale right there on the street.

Surely, they would have been interesting new creations.

However, whether they would have been palatable was an entirely different matter.

He spent a moment blinking and flashed the workers an apologetic smile, then he slammed the transmission into reverse, floored it, and drove a wedge into the people who had again flocked behind the vehicle. When the rear of the truck suddenly pushed into

midst of the desert riders, they reacted in panic, tearing wildly at the reins of their horses to avoid the obstacle.

From what he could see out of the corner of his eye, Indiana was satisfied that the cab had cleared the horses and their riders on either side. The maneuver had at least given him some breathing room. But as soon as the first of the riders regained control of their horses, they were on their hind feet, turning around and taking up the pursuit in the opposite direction.

Indiana turned the steering wheel while pushing on the brakes, causing the vehicle to spin around its own axis in a time-saving maneuver. Two of its wheels hung briefly in the air, threatening to overturn the truck, then crashed back onto the road and bounced a few times, their tires groaning. The transmission protested loudly when Indy slammed on the accelerator, but he didn't care, and stepped on the gas to shoot into the next alley. Here he was met with limited activity and just a short beep on his horn allowed him to increase his pace. Perhaps he had succeeded in shaking off his pursuers.

A look in the mirror told him that there was no reason for such confidence.

The bulk of the desert warriors had fallen behind, but one had kept up the pace, and was now running alongside the rear of the car, grabbing at the bars to which the tarp was tied. The next moment, before Indiana had a chance to yank the steering wheel, the man shifted his weight from the horse to the truck, all the while moving at breakneck speed. Cleverly, he pulled himself from beam to beam along the outside of the truck. The guy had obviously seen one too many pirate movies with Eroll Flynn, Indiana thought.

While Indiana was distracted, a fat Arab woman haul-ing laundry came out of a doorway a few yards in front of the truck and was suddenly confronted by the rolling, desert-beige monstrosity. With a sharp cry, she threw the clothes into the air and leaped back into the house with a long jump worthy of the Olympics. Indy tilted his head without thinking, as the woman's clothes now rested on the windshield. Most articles were immediately blown away, but a big white bed sheet got stuck on the hood, billowed up and completely obstructed his vision. Fortunately, the problem was solved with the windshield wipers, and now that he was no longer driving blind, he could only hope that he hadn't run over anyone in the meantime.

A flash in the mirror alerted him. He quickly threw himself to one side of the wheel — and not a moment too soon. Armed with a knife, the thug thrust his fist through the open driver's side window, and the blade buried itself not six inches from Indy's waist into the seat back, where moments before it would have found his heart.

The desert warrior was now balanced on the footboard outside the cabin. When he realized that he had missed his target, he pulled the knife out of the seat cover and tried to stab a second time, but at the same instant Indy's left hand shot toward him, grabbing his wrist. It was the start of a tough struggle. The knife tip danced toward one face, then away, toward the other.

For a while neither one could gain the advantage. While Indy used his left hand to keep the dagger from his neck and his right to steer the car through the middle of the bumpy street, he cursed the fact that he didn't have a third arm available. If he could push the guy's body through the driver's side window, it would have been easy to get rid of him. But in order to do this, he'd have to let go of either the guy's wrist or the steering wheel. The two alternatives were equally unpleasant. Either way, he could wind up with a knife in his belly. At least it wasn't going any better for the desert warrior. The man's one hand was stuck in Indy's grip, and the other was searching frantically for some way to secure himself.

Stalemate! Indy thought, but he knew that it couldn't go on that way forever.

He kept an eye out for any obstacles on the road, something he could use to knock the guy off the footboard.

There were none. There was nothing on the left side, except for shacks sheltering frightened people who would necessarily be mowed down if he tried anything.

Almost too late, he saw the bearded desert warrior who had appeared on the passenger side. Since the mirror was missing there, clipped along a house wall earlier, he hadn't noticed that a second pursuer had climbed onto the truck.

Who knew how many were still out there?

When he saw Indy's predicament, the man contorted his face into a contemptuous, triumphant grin and began to climb into the cabin through the open window. Indiana's gaze alternated back and forth between the blade on his left and the second desert warrior on his right, while he racked his brain for an idea — and what he needed

now was a *damn good* idea! But as always, when a bright idea was needed, there was none to be had.

The Bedouin, who had forced his way completely into the cabin, now demanded all Indy's attention, as he drew his dagger and attacked. Out of options, Indiana raised his right arm in defense, but the guy simply batted it away.

With a cry of victory on his lips, he reached out and plunged the dagger into Indiana's chest!

It snapped in two. Stunned, the Bedouin could only stare at the dagger's broken blade, then Indy's chest, unharmed beyond a small tear in his leather jacket — and before he came up with a solution to the puzzle, Indiana's fist crashed down on his nose, throwing him against the passenger door.

Indy reached back to the steering wheel just in time to avoid a front-end collision and silently thanked whatever fates had advised him to stow the death mask under his leather jacket.

But the warrior was far from beaten. He scrambled to his feet, dropped the useless dagger and again lunged at Indiana. This time he reached for his throat, closed his fingers around his neck and tried to strangle him.

Indiana had no other choice but to leave the steering wheel be. But the guy was too strong for one hand alone to break the grip around Indiana's neck; his fingers just wouldn't budge. Indy's other hand still clutched the wrist of the soldier on the running board. The latter was all the more determined to bring the fatal blow when he realized what was going on in the cabin. Miraculously, the driver-less truck had so far managed to avoid the frantic activity in the middle of the street.

Slowly, Indy was running out of air. Indiana's lungs struggled in vain for oxygen. Two or three times he jabbed his elbows into the bearded man's body. Although clearly in pain, he squeezed all the more firmly. So Indy grabbed his face and began to push it back. The man moaned and his neck muscles bulged, bracing themselves, but he would not relent.

Indiana felt as if he were paralyzed. As if the velvet curtain was about to drop. At the end of a long tunnel, he saw a parked wooden ox cart racing toward the truck.

It took seconds for the importance of this vision to penetrate his consciousness: With all the power he could muster, he slammed both

his feet down on the brake pedal.

The death grip around his neck broke abruptly when the warrior flew across the cabin, his head making a dull thud as it made contact with the windshield. Cracks ran through the glass like a spider web. The wrist of the second desert warrior pulled abruptly out of Indy's hand. The man had dropped his knife and now clawed at the door, just barely avoiding being thrown off the footboard.

Indiana had time to fill his lungs with a just short breath of fresh oxygen, because the truck continued to slide forward and struck the ox cart at high speed. He felt an irresistible force toss him hard against the steering wheel

— then the world disappeared into a hurricane of noise, screeching and clattering...

* * *

He floated weightlessly in the wonderful peace of darkness and silence. Then he slowly became aware of a shrill, piercing sound that grew louder and louder in his ears, bringing him back to reality.

When he opened his eyes, he found himself lying face down on the steering wheel, looking directly at what was left of the hood: a tangled heap of dented, broken and crumpled sheet metal. Hissing white steam rose up from the radiator. Of the ox cart that had blocked the way, almost nothing was left. Its existence was testified to only by fragmented remains of wood and boards, scattered over a wide area. With halting but determined steps, the first person approached the accident site. Barely a few seconds could have passed since the collision.

Indiana reached mechanically for his leather hat, which had fluttered from him to rest on the dashboard; he set it on his head before sinking back into the driver's seat. The haunting, penetrating tone then stopped. He realized that it was the horn, which he had activated with the weight of his upper body. Tentatively, he moved his limbs. Hard to believe, but he had apparently survived the ordeal totally intact — except for a stabbing pain in his chest, likely the result of a couple bruised or even cracked ribs. After all, his impact with the steering wheel had saved him from being thrown through the windshield like the one desert warrior, whose lifeless body was lying about twenty yards in front of the truck. He had evidently

landed on his head, which was now covered in blood. A few yards away lay the warrior from the running board. He did not look alive.

Only now, as the horn stopped sounding, Indy noticed that the engine was still running in idle. Dirty and damaged, but it was running! And the next sound that reached his ears was that of approaching hooves and yelling.

That snapped him back to full consciousness.

He glanced at the shattered pieces that remained of the mirror, and saw exactly what he feared most. A horde of desert warriors galloping toward him!

With a quick prayer, he reached for the gearbox and tried to shift gears. The gearbox cracked and rumbled, then shifted into first. The truck lurched into motion as Indy hit the accelerator. The alignment leaned heavily toward one side, a cloud was rising from the radiator, and the dented front end wobbled considerably — but now was not really the time for a detailed inspection. The vehicle was moving, and even if it only lasted a few more minutes, it was much more than Indy would have expected after his first look at the wreckage.

He drove the truck in the direction of the two motionless figures, passed the remains of the ox cart and then shifted into a higher gear. Defying his expectations, second gear worked. Indy raised his eyebrows. Should he test his luck further? Why not? After all his bad luck over the last hour, he was due for the odd lucky break. Though to be fair, he thought, he had survived the accident relatively unscathed. And the warriors hadn't caught up with him while he was unconscious, but — as reflected grimly — fate hadn't been kind enough to have them quit altogether! In the next few minutes, he'd have to rely on luck in even larger proportions.

While a segment of the desert warriors stopped at the crash site and dismounted their horses to take care of their two comrades, most of them chased after the truck un-shaken. Indiana had to admit that the riders caught up quickly. They were not thirty yards behind the rather beaten and banged-up truck, and closing fast.

Then he finally got the chance he'd been waiting for.

Before him was a mud house with a second-floor wooden balcony that extended over the road, resting on a row of wooden pillars. This gave Indy an idea. The people who had sought refuge under the balcony from the commotion scattered when they realized what he had in mind. Indy ducked down behind the wheel, as the hood

caught the first of the pillars, smashing it into firewood. A cloud of splinters sprayed into the cabin.

Then it was over, and he dared to lift his head again.

In the shards of the mirror he saw behind him the balcony free-floating in limbo for an instant, as if refusing to recognize the laws of gravity; then it collapsed into the street, blocking it completely with a great crash. A concrete wall couldn't have served the purpose better.

The desert warriors had to stop at the wreckage, cursing at the truck that they could just barely make out driving away on the other side. There was no way through.

Indy took a deep breath and focused on the road in front of him. In this maze of streets, back alleys and huts, It would take some time for the warriors to bypass the obstruction and again take up the pursuit. The thought gave him a tiny spark of happiness, the only one he'd allow himself before he was aboard the ocean liner.

He drove on toward the harbor until the engine lurched forward and then lost power. From the sound of the radiator, the coolant must have been completely spent. Less than five hundred yards away from the pier, the truck finally gave up the ghost. It creaked, then it rattled, and then the engine died. Indiana kept the vehicle rolling right up to the curb outside the harbor. With a "well done, pal!"

he slapped the dashboard, then pushed open the door and jumped out.

The harbor was full of more people than the rest of the city combined. From all over the world, they jostled for position, trying to secure passage on one of the few ocean liners. Casablanca was seen as a neutral and relatively safe haven during the Second World War that was raging with intensity in other parts of North Africa and throughout the Mediterranean. Whoever had the freedom and financial means to do so came here seeking passage to less dangerous locales. Long lines of people waited outside the custom office, blocking access to the pier. Many people had dragged their life's belongings with them, and were laden with suitcases and bags. And in the middle of everything, some Arab street musicians performed more-or-less successful versions of "In the Mood" or "Lili Marleen" to earn a few coins.

To Indy's great relief, he saw that his ship was still in port. But the sound of the boat horn announced that it was ready to embark.

He pushed through one of the queues to get to the customs office. Now was no time for politeness.

"Hey, young man! The line starts back here!"

"It's an outrage! What if everyone behaved as such!"

or "No manners, these Americans!" were among the most generous remarks regarding his lack of courtesy. He stu-diously ignored them all. Better to annoy a few would-be passengers than to feel the blade of a desert warrior in his chest. He quickly looked around. His pursuers were nowhere to be seen. But they could appear at any moment. And the trail of overturned store displays and scattered customers left behind him had created a new group of people who wanted his head, maybe even more than the Bedouins.

Finally he reached the customs house, where a gray-haired, bony Frenchman in an immaculate uniform was on duty. His proud, twirled mustache and bumbling facial expression gave the impression that he must have been an early veteran of this second World War. Through a monocle wedged into one eye, he reviewed the papers of a large Italian family.

"Listen!" Indy turned to him. "I need to get to that ship over there. Could you possibly make an exception for me…"

The customs officer looked up angrily and waved his hand as if to scare away an annoying insect.

"Step back and wait until it's your turn!" he demanded with authority.

"Please, it's urgent. My ship could leave at any minute."

"Like I said, you have to wait. We do everything by the book here." He looked through his monocle at Indiana, sizing him up from top to bottom, wrinkling his nose at the dirty, sweaty face before him. Then he added dismissively,

"After all, this isn't the Wild West."

And he once again immersed himself in the papers.

Indy sighed and took his place behind the Italian family.

"Serves you right!" bawled a fat woman behind him.

"By all rights, they should send you to the very back of the line!"

He didn't respond, but kept his head down and tried to convince himself that if he couldn't see the desert warriors, they wouldn't be able to see him. Impatiently rock-ing on his feet, constantly casting anxious glances over his shoulder, he waited while the customs official examined the Italian family's passports as meticulously as

humanly possible. After what seemed like an eternity — Indiana felt he could have read, memorized and written a book about customs regulations during the wait — the official finally finished and beckoned him forward.

"Like I told you," Indiana began, "I have to get to…"

"Papers please!" the unpersuaded bureaucrat interrupted, his hand extended demandingly.

Indiana patted the pockets of his clothes, until after a few seconds he realized he had left all his papers back at the hotel. Who could bother with passports and boat tickets when driving into the desert to steal a sacred artifact from a Bedouin tribe?

He took a deep breath.

"I don't seem to have them, unfortunately. But it's no problem. They're probably already on the steamer. My traveling companion would have taken them on board. If you need them, then just let me pass, and I…"

"You mean to say that you have no papers?" interrupted the bored Frenchman.

"I… uh…" Indiana raised his eyebrows. Wasn't that exactly what he had just said? "Of course I have papers,"

he said. "I just don't have them *on me* at the moment!"

"I'm sorry," said the bureaucrat, though his countenance expressed the exact opposite. "Then I cannot let you through."

That was the end of it, as far as he was concerned. He raised his hand to call forward the next traveler.

"You have to believe me!" Indiana urged, pointing to the ship ready embark, its ramp pulling away from the pier.

Again the ship's horn blew. "There is a cabin on that ship reserved in my name. Why not ask someone from the crew? They would be able to tell you."

"Unfortunately, that would be against protocol. I cannot just leave my station unattended! And how could I verify whether the cabin was booked in your name if you don't have the proper documentation to identify yourself?"

Indiana groaned. He felt as if he were talking to a wall.

He forced the friendliest smile he could muster.

"Can't you make an exception? This is an emergency.

It's about life and death. And I mean that literally!"

“An exception?” repeated the Frenchman with a gaunt, shocked countenance, as if he had just been asked to kill his mother. “I’m not here to make exceptions. What do you think of me?”

“Well, I…” Indy started, but stopped himself short.

If he answered the question honestly, he could kiss his chances of getting past goodbye. Probably, it was pointless anyway, trying to convince the man. Public servants of his kind, barricading themselves behind a wall of overbearing rules and regulations, were common all around the world (and were currently particularly numerous in the German Third Reich). At some point — and Indiana had harbored this fear for a while — the time would come when the bureaucrats of all countries banded together to pursue world domination. If they hadn’t already done so!

“And anyway — what’s that over there?”

The man pointed his index finger at Indiana’s stomach, as if discovering something unusually disgusting. He looked down at himself.

“What’s what?” he asked blankly.

“Well, there on your belt. It looks to me to be a hand-gun. So that’s another reason I cannot let pass. If you want to take it with you, you must obtain a special stamp on your application form.”

“And how long will that take?”

“Oh, not long. About two weeks, perhaps.”

Indiana felt his already overextended patience begin to crack. When the ocean liner’s ropes were untied, that was the final straw.

“I haven’t got two minutes,” he cried excitedly. “Don’t you understand? I really need to board this ship! And now!”

The customs officer was unimpressed.

“Yelling about it won’t change the rules.” He waved his hand. “And now, could you please step aside? There are others waiting behind you.”

Indiana took a deep breath. Had he just survived a frantic chase, only to fail because of a stubborn paper-pusher?

He answered that question with a clear no.

“Listen!” he cried, marching up to the official. “You let me leave here right now, or…?”

The little man stared at him impassively.

“*Or?*”

Indiana was about to lunge over the counter, grab the man by the collar and shake some reason into him, but at the other end of the small building two more French customs officials appeared in uniform. They were armed with submachine guns and were obviously there to provide calm and order for the port. Suspicious and alert, they peered in Indy's direction. They seemed to have identified him as a potential troublemaker. They weren't wrong.

He stopped in mid-motion, then twiddled his fingers for a moment, as if performing hand gymnastics, and let his arms fall again.

"Or?" repeated the official.

"Or... uh... I guess I have no alternative but to concede that I am satisfied with your service." He smiled and tapped his fingers awkwardly against the brim of his hat.

"Well, thanks for trying. You did the best you could."

"Well, finally!" shrieked the fat woman, when he went back to the line of people. "I was beginning to think this line had closed for the day."

Of course, Indiana was not about to admit defeat so easily. From a distance, he glanced nervously at the barriers and customs house. The whole dock was hermetically sealed. It was too late to find a truck to ram through the gates, or to just jump into the water away from the harbor and swim for the ship. Either option would take too long.

Was he mistaken, or did he hear a low rumble in the air, indicating that the machinery of the steamer had started?

It was now or never.

He felt someone tugging at his pant leg, and saw a little boy, a member of the street musicians, looking up at him expectantly.

"A song, mister?" he asked hopefully. "We'll play anything you want."

"No, thanks. Beat it, kid, I'm busy."

"Just one song," the boy pleaded. "For extra cheap!

What do you want, mister? American national anthem?"

"No!" he repeated, irritated. "Like I said, I..." Wait, what had the boy said? The American national anthem?

As Indiana thoughtfully stroked his chin, the kernel of an idea began to form in his head. Maybe he had misjudged the customs officer...

“Can you do the Marseillaise?”

“The French national anthem? Of course.” Then the boy added, surprised: “But why do you want to hear that, mister? You’re American, right?”

Indiana twisted his face into a mirthless smile.

“Let’s say that I’ve learned to appreciate the French culture and lifestyle. Especially in the last few minutes.” He rummaged through his pockets. He had left even his wallet back at the hotel. Luckily, he found a single tencent piece and threw the coin to the boy. “Get going. And make sure you play it lively!”

“Yes, Mister, we will. This will be the most beautiful Marseillaise that you have ever heard.”

“I’m sure it’ll be great, just as long as it’s loud!”

The boy ran to the street musicians and informed them about their new gig. Immediately they halted their less-than-faithful version of “I’m Dreaming of A White Christ-mas” — no wonder, when it was over 100 degrees in the shade — and started right into the French national anthem. The Marseillaise was not written for the flat and droning Arabian musical instruments. But it was recognizable, at least, and most importantly, it was loud, just as Indiana had hoped. Discreetly, he approached the customs house of his special friend. The effect was immediate. When the first sounds reached the ear of the official, he abandoned his post to position himself closer to the music. Eyes fixed straight ahead, he saluted.

This was the opportunity Indiana had been waiting for.

Carefully, he pushed past the first person in line, putting a finger to his mouth in a gesture to keep them quiet. At the customs house, he bent down and crawled on hands and knees, hiding behind the counter directly under the eyes of the official, whose glassy stare was miles away. At the end of the counter, Indiana peered cautiously around the corner. The two armed uniformed men had resumed their patrol and did not present a danger at this time. The way was clear. Between him and the liner, there was still a hundred and fifty foot pier, lined with hundreds of travelers awaiting passage.

He got up and walked out onto the pier as inconspicuously as possible. When the steamer pushed off the dock toward the open sea, he suppressed the urge to start running. The men in uniform would have noticed him. Instead, he quickened his pace and kept a keen eye on the steel giant, which for the time being was gliding on the water,

nearly parallel to the pier. Its distance from the dock was growing, but slowly. It was perhaps now just a great leap away.

The problem was that the Marseillaise was a very short anthem. He was little more than a few steps onto the pier when the music broke off and the sharp cry of the customs officer hit him like a knife in the back.

“Hey, you! Get back here!”

Indiana had no intention of honoring that request. Instead, he started to run, as fast as he could.

“Stop!” shouted the officer in a strained voice. “Stop that man!”

With a glance over his shoulder, Indiana saw that the two uniformed men had started after him. Leaping into action, each had taken his submachine gun from his shoulder, but in the middle of the crowded dock neither dared pull the trigger for fear of causing dozens of innocent victims. So they had no other choice than to capture him by hand.

That was the moment when a loud howl announced that the desert warriors had reached the harbor! The commotion at the customs house told them that the man they sought had been there. They gave their horses a kick and galloped to the customs house. The terrified people in line dove apart to avoid getting trampled under the horses’

hooves or ripped apart by the careless wave of a saber.

“Stop!” cried the officer to the oncoming horde, raising his hand defensively, as if that could stop them. “You cannot pass. Especially not with the horses. Now, if you’d line up single-file…”

He got no further, because by then the first of the riders had galloped right into the customs house. They knocked over the counter, tore apart the narrow doorway, which gave the simple structure its stability, and as the whole building collapsed in on itself under the onslaught of the horses, the officer himself remained such a conscientious professional that he had no other choice but to summon security.

The two uniformed men who had been pursuing Indiana stopped when they saw the horde and the resulting destruction. They seemed unsure how to react. They hadn’t covered this type of situation in their training. The desert people rarely ventured into the city, and when they did, it was usually only to sell their wares.

Indiana ran. He bumped into people and pushed them aside, while offering excuses in all the languages he could manage. Once again he looked around. The first rider had broken through to the pier and now called to him.

The clatter of galloping horses echoed on the pavement.

He stumbled over something at his feet, and an instant later found himself on the ground — surrounded by colorful jumble of laundry, shoes and other paraphernalia.

He had collided with the woman from the Italian family that had been cleared through customs before him. The force of the impact had knocked free her travel bags, whose contents had poured over a wide area on the paved ground.

She stared briefly at the scattered belongings that Indiana held, and then she let loose a heart-rending wail as only a real Italian mama could.

“All right, all right!” Indy hastened to comfort her.

“Calm down! Everything’s okay.”

Automatically, he reached for the closest pile of clothes and gathered them together. The next moment he was seized with the thought, what the hell was he doing! Waiting for his ship to move out of reach so he could surrender himself to the desert warriors? Hurriedly, he pushed an armful of stuff toward the woman and sprinted on.

The distance between boat and dock had increased further and was now five or six feet. He was still fifty yards away. He was frankly a little scared of the possibility of another run-in with the desert warriors. The wild swing-ing of their swords left no doubt what they intended to use them for. Fortunately, they were not armed with guns. If they had been, he would have been a goner long ago.

Suddenly, a small native boy was at his side.

“Dr. Jones. Dr. Jones!” he cried, waving a piece of paper. It was apparently a postcard that he wanted to sell to travelers.

“Not now, kid!” he cried, simultaneously surprised and impatient. These local boys always picked the wrong moment to make a deal!

He was approaching the end of the pier. Indiana mustered his strength, already feeling the breath of the horses on his back. The warriors’ battle cry roared in his ears, and he expected to be struck by a deadly sword at any moment. The steamer was now further from

the dock. It was ten or twelve feet out, and Indiana cursed himself for wasting crucial seconds with that Italian woman.

Finally, he reached the edge. With all his strength, he vaulted toward the ship.

For a long moment, he hung in the air, fearing that he had overestimated his long-jumping skills, before his body smashed into the hull. As he fell, he threw his arms up, striving to grasp the railing. His fingers closed around the metal.

He had done it!

Seconds later, two of the desert warriors reached the end of the wharf, jumped from their horses and stood there scowling. The first man leaped after Indy, splashing into the water two or three yards away, and the other tripped over the hem of his garment before he could mount a proper attempt. He tumbled over the side of the pier, falling with the grace of a cement bag.

Indiana allowed himself a smile of relief, grabbed the next bar and slowly pulled himself up. The desert warriors would cause him no more headaches. If the first two had failed to follow him onto the ship, then so would the others, who had just reached the scene, reining in their horses. The gap between ship and pier was too great. And their daggers were no good as missiles.

His smile froze as he lifted his head toward upper deck and gazed upon a pair of dark shoes, which had suddenly appeared in front of his nose. Out of breath and overly cautious — wanting to delay as long as possible the knowledge of what new calamity awaited him — he looked up at the darkly dressed figure, rising above the railing so ominously.

“How nice to finally see you here, Dr. Jones!” He heard an unpleasantly familiar voice dripping with sar-casm. “Frankly, I wouldn’t have dared to believe that you would have the audacity to show up. And I see you’ve once again chosen traveling companions according to your taste. You seem to feel right at home in the company of such scoundrels and crooks!”

Indiana sighed in relief.

Grisswald! Who else would it have been!

He should have known that his friend, with whom he had come to Morocco and with whom he planned to travel back to the United States, would sooner or later curse the day he’d met Indiana Jones. Of course, he’d have preferred later. Like maybe after he had

changed clothes, washed up and slept for twenty-four hours. Or at least, after he had properly pulled himself aboard .

"Do you really have no concept of responsibility?" wailed the thin man. "Do you think maybe I like being abandoned in hotels and then waiting here on board for hours, never certain of whether you're coming back or not? You can't appreciate the agony I've endured. What should I have said to the dean of your university when I returned? Ultimately, I am responsible for our operation." And with an ever more reproachful tone — if that were possible — he added: "*Responsibility*, Dr. Jones! Do you even know how to spell it?"

Indiana opened his mouth to reply, when something grabbed at his feet and pulled him down. He lost his grip, swatted around blindly and was lucky enough to get a hold on the bottom rail again. A jolt went through his body, almost tearing his fingers.

"Enough silliness, Dr. Jones!" Grisswald scolded. "Don't try to hide!"

Indiana had more pressing things to do than to respond.

He looked down. The desert warrior, the one who had been the first to leap after him, had reached the boat and now clung to his legs. Indy tried to get rid of him with a few kicks, but the guy had his arms wrapped so tightly around his legs that he didn't move an inch. Indiana could feel his fingers slowly losing their grip around the rail. With the added weight, he wouldn't last long, seconds at best.

He stepped up his efforts, which probably would not have succeeded if the man hadn't made a mistake. He pulled his way up slowly along Indiana's trousers and reached out his hand for the Colt in Indy's holster, and Indy took advantage of this moment.

With a jerk, one of Indy's legs was free. A quick kick with his heel, an ugly crunch, and the Bedouin's embrace loosened. The warrior reached up again and desperately tried to cling onto something. And he found something —

but not the right thing: His fingers closed around the handle of Indiana's Colt, hanging loosely from his belt — and tore it out. Man and weapon disappeared into the howling water. Seconds later, the Bedouin appeared at the surface, gasping for air, now more concerned with keeping his head above water and taking care of his broken nose.

With one last heave, Indiana pulled himself over the railing and finally had the wooden planks of the ship's deck under his feet. From

the pier, the desert warriors' howls of rage echoed across the sea. They swung their fists and stared menacingly after the ship with darkened faces. If looks could kill, it would have depopulated continents. Indiana could think of nothing better than to wave a friendly goodbye. After the hunt he endured the last few hours, he had earned it.

The leader of the horde, the only one still in his saddle, contorted his face into a grimace and reluctantly turned his horse around. He probably couldn't bear the shame of defeat. He kicked one of his underlings to assert his place.

Indiana smiled. It was the same everywhere, whether in distant Washington, steaming tropical jungles, or the desert.

Anger was always taken out on those who had nothing to do with it and who were too weak to defend themselves.

"Dr. Jones!" called the outraged Grisswald behind him.

"Might you eventually have the courtesy to face me? Or do you think I enjoy speaking to myself…?"

Indiana thought that *precisely*. And not just in this moment, but ever since he had met Grisswald a few weeks ago and had become conditioned to his cantankerous attacks, which always revolved around the same themes: punctuality, duty, rules. And everything possible in triplicate. Indiana would never have made this trip with Grisswald if the dean of his university hadn't asked. *Mr. Grisswald may not exactly suit your temperament*, he heard him say as he sat still in his office, *but he has earned great accolades for his advancement of archaeological research methods, and so I ask you, as an experienced man, to allow him to accompany you on this little expedition*. Indiana had wondered what use he could have for the services of such a hollow-cheeked accountant-type — he had probably developed new categories and rules for the cataloging of antiquarian books — but the unspoken pressure conveyed in the dean's eyes had finally convinced him. A decision he had regretted every day since. If Grisswald remained in his company, it was only because the dean had given him considerable freedom for his expeditions in recent years, and even defended him when he found himself in some tricky positions, so Indy owed him a favor. And so, he did his best to tune out and endure the pedantic Grisswald with angelic patience. He could only hope that the rumors proved to be false, the ones echoing in the corridors of the university that said that the slender,

pale man was the leading candi-date to succeed the current dean. Grisswald at the head of the department — he couldn't imagine a bigger disaster. It would look like the bureaucratic version of the Apocalypse (probably also in triplicate)!

He turned around, striving for a serious expression.

"Mr. Grisswald," he began with a sigh. "Believe me. I can explain everything…"

"Explain?" Grisswald repeated, as if he had been waiting to hear this magic word. His color changed from simply reddish to crimson. The palette of reds that was available to his usually pale face was was without limit — as Indiana knew from personal experience. A chameleon would be envious. "Look, I've had it with your so-called explanations! And I believe I have everything covered thoroughly.

I'm satisfied with what I saw with my own eyes; I don't want to know any more. You have reduced probably half of Casablanca to nothing but rubble and ash."

Indiana had to admit that this was true in a sense, at least for the streets through which he had raced with his truck. But even if he had wanted to say something, he could not do so. Grisswald was talking up a storm and seemed determined to let nothing and nobody stop it, least of all Indiana.

"I hardly need emphasize, Dr. Jones, how much I'm disappointed in you! I should like to formally remind you, once again, that we traveled here to learn about a legendary death mask known as the *Face of the Goddess Mohk*. And while I'm busy at the major museums and local antique dealers, investigating old, dusty inventory lists, you obviously had nothing better to do than to sneak out and mingle with your friends in the area." He poked his index finger into the air. "I promise you that the disciplinary action will be severe. This is as certain as an Amen in church!

Immediately upon our return, I will tell the dean of your university — aaaaahoooooh…!"

Indiana was pleasantly surprised, even entertained, by Grisswald's sudden, unusual behavior. As his astonished cry grew louder, his jaw dropped, and his eyes widened, staring at something happening behind Indy's back.

He spun around and saw the leader of the desert warriors on his black stallion racing toward him as if in slow motion. At that moment he realized that the Bedouin hadn't turned away in shame,

but instead did so in order to take a running jump atop his steed, intending to leap the great distance to the steamer. Now still in flight, in one hand he held the reins, while the other raised his sword above to deal the fatal blow.

The next moment the horse's front feet touched the deck, less than five feet from Indiana. With a cry of hatred on his face, the warrior lashed out, and Indiana would have been surprised if the blow didn't tear his head from shoulders — if only the horse's hoofs were able to grip the slippery planks…

While it desperately tried to secure its footing, it slid right between Indiana and Grisswald, and one second later spilled over the other side of the deck railing, its rider with it. A loud splash testified to their fate.

Before Indiana looked to see what had become of them, he glanced at the pier, where the other warriors waited. But none of them dared to repeat this crazy stunt. Only then he hurried to the rail, over which the horse and rider had fell. The two paddled back toward the wharf, where the horse was determined to find a less reckless master.

Grisswald seemed to have difficulty closing his agape mouth. There was obviously a difference between talking about danger and staring it in the eye. For the moment —

and Indiana wished that it would last for hours — Grisswald was actually speechless.

"Mr. Jones! Mr. Jones!" Indy heard a small voice call from the bank. It was the little native boy who had previously turned up next to him. He stood at the far end of the pier and waved what Indy had assumed was a postcard for sale. "A telegram! A telegram for you!"

All at once he realized why the boy addressed him by name. Dumbfounded, he looked to the shore. The distance was already thirty, forty yards. How could the boy get the telegram on board?

"Find a stone, wrap the telegram around it, and throw it over!" he yelled to him.

The boy showed that he had been thinking ahead, presenting a fist-sized rock in his open palm. As instructed, he wrapped the cable around it, he didn't throw it. Instead he challenged Indiana with an unambiguous gesture, rubbing his thumb and index finger together.

Indy knew what he wanted. He checked his pockets, but remembered he'd given his last coins to the musicians.

He turned around.

“Grisswald! Give me a coin! Hurry!”

Still under the spell of the desert warrior, he opened his wallet without argument and took out a fifty-cent piece.

Indy grabbed it, gauged the distance and threw. The coin described a semicircular path in the sky for two seconds before the boy caught it. He looked at the coin, rubbed it clean on his coat, and tucked it away, then threw the stone with the message across to the ship. Had he been born on the other side of the Atlantic, any college baseball team would have been torn about whether to offer him a scholarship as catcher or a pitcher.

The stone fell one yard in front of the railing. Indiana’s outstretched hand bobbled it, but the stone slipped from his fingers like a bar of soap and fell into the water. More importantly, however, the message itself remained trapped by his fingers. With a thumb’s up, he signaled to the boy that he had done his job well. The boy responded with the same sign, then turned and vanished into the crowd.

“Dr. Jones!” Grisswald said, slowly regaining his composure. His voice, however, was not necessarily as sharp as he intended. “If you want to get yourself into a hair-raising adventure, that is one thing, but once you put innocent people into danger, that is something else...”

Fortunately, he was distracted by a member of the crew, apparently drawn by the commotion, who with a stern look at Indiana, politely but firmly asked for their boarding passes. Grisswald proved his organizational skills, as he had both boarding passes on him, and he pulled them out to show the man. The man looked at them briefly before he handed them back, wished them both a good voyage and then disappeared.

Indiana, meanwhile, had torn open the envelope and read the telegram. It had been sent from the University of Washington, along with a separate forwarded message.

And as he read the words, he was seized suddenly by a jumble of long forgotten memories that threatened to transport him back to old times.

“Where were we, Dr. Jones?” Grisswald turned to him.

“Oh yes, we were talking about...”

“Wrong!” Indiana interrupted.

Grisswald started.

“What?”

“We weren’t talking about anything! But whatever you wanted to say — you didn’t happen to bring my wallet with you?”

“Of course I did! Someone had to take care of it.” He shook his head. “It’s a mystery how you survive your legendary adventures, renowned the world over, without remembering even the simplest things!”

He took out the wallet from the inside pocket of his suit and gave it to Indiana, who in turn removed the golden mask from under his coat and pressed it into Grisswald’s hands.

“Here, take it back to Washington, and give the students my best wishes!”

“Yes, but… this is… that’s…” Grisswald stared in bewilderment at the glittering splendor of the gold and precious stones. Where the blade of the desert warrior had struck, there was a small notch.

“The Face of the Goddess Mohk,” Indiana instructed.

“I took the liberty of fetching it for you.”

He looked up at the pier. The three desert warriors who had wound up in the water had since retreated with their companions. They had apparently seen that there was nothing more they could do here, and grudgingly accepted their defeat. Indiana took on an air of satisfaction, and swung one leg over the railing, then the other. With his hands behind his back, he braced himself along the top bar, leaning over the side to size up the situation.

“But how did you…?” Grisswald stopped when he saw what Indiana was up to. Irritated, he frowned. “My goodness! Dr. Jones, what are you doing? Come back on board at once! Otherwise, you are going to fall into…”

Indiana let go and jumped. The cool water closed around him. When he emerged, the steamer had traveled a considerable distance. At its rear, a wildly gesticulating Grisswald stood at the railing.

“What is the meaning of this, Dr. Jones?” he shrieked, his voice cracking. “Have you completely lost your mind?”

“Just a small change in my travel plans!”

“But for heaven’s sake! Where are you going?”

“Istanbul!”

“Istanbul?” repeated Grisswald, falling silent for a moment of consternation, then firing off an endless barrage of accusations and

tirades in Indiana's direction, culminating in the senseless command: "You come back on board right now, Dr. Jones! That's an order. Do you hear me...?"

Indiana, who had not known until moments earlier how many rules and principals of decency he had violated by jumping overboard, grinned. For as much as he hated to admit it — not even a world swimming champion could have caught up with the steamer now! He acted as if he couldn't understand a word because of the increased distance, then waved goodbye to Grisswald and started to swim ashore.

* * *

Fifteen minutes later, he walked on the beach near the harbor dripping wet. And while he made his way to book passage for the next ship to Istanbul, he recalled once more the text of the telegram: *"Now I must remind you of the promise you made in Yucatan + + + You are urgently needed in Istanbul + + + Basil Smith."*

That was all.

But it was enough. Indiana knew what he had to do.

2

Istanbul, Turkey
Mid-May 1941

Indiana breathed a sigh of relief when he disembarked the small cargo boat on a narrow ramp, and finally felt Turkish soil under his feet. It had taken fourteen days to get here from Casablanca through the Bosporus Strait — a journey that was normally completed in less than half that time.

For a while it had appeared impossible to reach Istanbul at all by ship — and a flight was out of the question in these troubled times. All around the Mediterranean, bloody battles raged, the water itself divided between German, Italian and British naval forces in a bitter war at sea. Another factor was that German and Italian troops in recent weeks had succeeded in occupying Greece — a development that had caused terror everywhere. Over the entire Aegean Sea, a total naval blockade was imposed. Under such circumstances, captains who dared venture out to sea were extremely rare. They were the hardened and ruthless thugs who made a lucrative business out of the plight of the people, and their ships often carried contraband, including human cargo. Most of them traveled only at night, with their lights switched to the off position, and then only a few hundred miles to the nearest safe haven. Indiana had to change

vessels dozens of times, each time paying huge sums to secure passage. His money supply had dwindled, but what did money matter, given the fact that without Basil Smith, he wouldn't be alive!

Smith had paid for his selfless rescue with a broken hip, and a walking stick had become his constant companion.

Afterward, whenever Indiana ran into him in the corridors of the university, it made him feel guilty. All this would not have been necessary if he had only been a little more cautious! Only once had he the courage to speak to him on this issue. Smith had flashed him a gentle smile and assured him that it wasn't Indiana's fault. It happened because it was *supposed* to happen, so why worry about things that you couldn't do anything to change anything anyway? But this advice was difficult to take take to heart, when Indy's feelings of guilt felt so real.

Soon after Basil Smith had completed his stay as visit-ing professor at the University of Washington, he left the United States. They hadn't met since, but Indiana had often seen pictures of the professor in the daily press or in academic journals, whenever his latest startling discoveries caught the public's imagination. His colleagues spoke about him with the utmost respect, often calling him an archaeological genius! In recent years, though, the news of Basil Smith had been harder to come by, with no new discoveries, no thrills, no publications. It proved once again, nothing was as fleeting as fame.

Indiana hadn't been able to sleep the past fortnight, his mind wrestling with the meaning of this sudden message, after fifteen years of silence. Was Smith in trouble? Maybe even in danger? Or did he need help for other reasons?

The telegram had said nothing about it. But when the usually calm professor, never one to be overly dramatic, issued a statement like "You are *urgently* needed in Istanbul!" to Indiana, and made reference to his Yucatan promise, it was clear that this was a serious matter. But another question remained unanswered: Why him? Why would the professor request his help from halfway around the world? Wasn't there anyone else he could turn to — the police, for example? A famous man like Smith must surely know people with more influence and resources than Indiana had at his disposal.

What continued to worry him was the fact that the telegram had been sent from Istanbul almost a half month ago. That was a lot of

time, especially when many dangers could materialize in one and a half minutes. What if Smith was no longer in the city? If he had really been in serious trouble, it was hardly likely he would be able to wait that long.

Indiana looked skeptically at the endless sea of houses that stretched before him, remembering that the telegram had left out something else very important, namely, the professor's whereabouts!

He sighed. Not exactly the best conditions. In this labyrinth of streets, swarming with locals, refugees, soldiers and merchants, it could take months to find a single person, especially if that person had been forced into hiding. Fortunately, Basil Smith was not a normal person like everyone else. Indiana knew the professor and his quirks very well. Such a man as he left his mark — perhaps even deliberate signs, intended only for his former protégé. After all, he must have considered that it would take some time to arrive here from America. He had played the Indy card. What else could he do? Apparently, it was the only card he had. It remained to be seen whether it would be his trump card.

Indiana stepped onto the street outside the harbor, and immediately a couple of ragged teenagers surrounded him, begging for alms. With a reluctant gesture, he shooed them out of the way. Had he given only one of them a coin, within seconds he would have undoubtedly found himself in the middle of a swarm of begging children, also hoping to receive a donation. And in such a crowd, the most experienced and skilled kids would end up with all the money. Furthermore, he knew that these children belonged to gangs, which had divided the city into districts among themselves, and that they had to give up most of the money they earned begging just to be allowed to "work around here." These mafias, whether large or small, sprung up wherever tourists were waving money. And mafia bosses could be found here, too — not just in Italy.

Suddenly he thought he felt a hard stare his back. The hairs on the back of his neck stood up almost imperceptibly, but it was a sensation that every adventurer sooner or later came to understand, at least if he stayed alive long enough. When he turned, he saw something of a small, frail Turk, who stood leaning against a railing, looking directly at him. When their eyes met, he turned, frightened, and disappeared into the maze of people.

Indiana frowned. It probably meant nothing. He beckoned to one of the rickety, local taxis, which hung about in droves, looking for wealthy-looking foreign customers.

Seconds later, he was surrounded by half a dozen cars, whose drivers gesticulated at him, loudly appealing to him, and arguing among themselves about who had the hungri-est children, the laziest cousins and the most quarrelsome wives, and thus had the greatest claim on this prospective passenger. Indiana finally ended the chaos by simply getting into the car that made the most trustworthy impression. Immediately afterward, the driver thanked him so verbosely and effusively that they probably would have been sitting in the same spot the next morning, if Indiana hadn't interrupted to tell him his destination.

The taxi drove off and plunged into the turmoil of the streets. At first glance, everywhere there was the lively bustle of a typical Arab city, yet an invisible depression hung in the air. Since the Germans had conquered Greece, the World War was now right outside the front door, and the naval blockade limited the waterways here in Istanbul, a city that had always depended on trade. Although the Turkish government had protected itself through friendship treaties both with the Third Reich as well as with its wartime enemies, it was trying to obtain assurances from Berlin that no invasion plans existed. But the war events of recent years had shown how little you could trust the word of the Nazi government. The neutrality of the country meant that soldiers of all allegiances roamed the city, eyeing each other warily with their weapons drawn whenever they met on the street. But such encounters rarely exploded into violence, and instead mostly ended in hostile glances and a few whispered insults. Indiana had a sinking feeling in his stomach when the taxi drove past a group of German soldiers. In recent years he had had some painful experiences with them. The only people that the situation did not seem to affect were the traders, who offered their goods on every street corner. Some streets were filled with so many shops and stalls that they looked more like bazaars than thoroughfares.

In just such a road, the car stopped. Indiana informed the driver that he was no unsuspecting tourist whom he could charge an exorbitant sum — the number of miles multiplied by the date, say — for a fifteen minute drive.

When they had agreed on an amount, Indy left the driver, whose enthusiasm was noticeably less exuberant. Honking, he disappeared into the crowd.

Indiana looked around the square. Years ago, long before the outbreak of World War II, he'd made his way to Istanbul once, just for a few days. At that time, he had been on this same street, lined on both sides with shops of all sizes. Here he had made the acquaintance of a Syrian merchant who sold antiques and artifacts in a small souvenir shop. In addition to private collectors, some of the most prestigious museums in the world had been on his list of clients. Mysteriously, he specialized in pieces that were previously thought stolen. Needless to say, that for

"re-procurement" of such items, he demanded juicy prices

— which were usually paid. The buyers seemed to be indifferent with whom they did business, as long as they got what they wanted. About the channels through which these pieces came to him, the dealer stayed silent. One could assume that his suppliers were just as mysterious as he was himself. If Indiana came here, it was because nobody in Istanbul was better informed about any rumor that had the slightest thing to do with archaeology. Maybe that was the secret of his success.

Indiana soon realized that the small shop with the seedy exterior, the sloping front door and covered windows — as the business remained in his memory — was no longer here. Instead, the same location was gussied up with a perfectly painted facade and large windows, decorated with oriental paintings, behind which were displayed a hodge-podge of various items — from simple postcards to a guaranteed authentic mummy (that Indiana recognized as a forgery after just two glances). A large welcoming sign above the door announced, in conspicuous letters, that the man he was looking for remained the proprietor:

Yassir Al-Kassah
Souvenirs & Antiques

The shop seemed to have done well in recent years. Indiana crossed the street, taking advantage of a hole in the seemingly endless chain of rattling vans, taxis, and mopeds.

After a slight hesitation, he opened the door.

The shop inside was exactly what the outside had promised.

Shelves, cabinets and glass cases were crammed with hand-carved figurines, statues, urns, jewelry and other trinkets.

Some of it was quite nice, but mostly it was cheap kitsch.

Indiana wasn't fooled. No Arab trader would be so stupid as to exhibit his most valuable pieces in the showroom.

No, these items were only here for tourists, hobbyists and would-be experts. When it came to something of value, the corresponding sales calls would not be here, but would instead take place in the back room, shielded from the eyes of ordinary customers.

Currently the expansive retail space was populated by about twenty people, mostly locals in long white caftans, inspecting objects that caught their interest for one reason or another. The slow rotation of the ceiling fans ensured a pleasantly cool air, leading some people to browse here only to escape the oppressive heat in the streets. Indiana looked around for an employee who could take him to Al-Kassah, just as an unmistakable, booming bass voice sounded through the room.

"That couldn't be...?" A short pause. "By all the jinn and spirits of the desert! It is truly him. Indiana Jones!

Dr. Indiana Jones! "

He turned his head and saw a six-foot-wide, living steam roller, in a magnificent caftan adorned with precious embroideries, come out from behind the counter and roll in his direction. A second later, his arms reached out and and grabbed him with the violence of an animal.

"You ill-bred son of a mangy hyena!" he roared deeply into Indiana's ear so that his eardrums hurt. "You worthless descendant of a shabby sand flea! Let the vultures pick the flesh from your bones and leave the rest to the worms!"

Indiana gasped and felt as if several ribs had been broken. Al-Kassah, whose immense girth was even larger than Indiana remembered, released his grip momentarily, the grabbed Indiana by the shoulders, holding him with outstretched arms and glaring at him with a furrowed brow.

"That you actually have the audacity to show your face again! I should have you skinned alive. But that would be an insufficient punishment, after what you pulled!"

“I, uh…” Indy began uncomfortably, knowing full well what the Syrian merchant alluded to. Only he had thought that time would have healed that injury — at least a little.

Apparently, he was mistaken. Hopefully not fatally so!

“So it’s true what they say about the famous doctor from faraway Washington,” Al-Kassah shouted in a loud voice, as if to inform everyone around the Mediterranean about it. “They say that he fears neither death nor the devil!” He looked down at Indiana with pity and added softly: “It must be true, if you dare to walk directly into hell. Because this place will be nothing else for you!”

“And what role are you going to play? Death or the devil?”

Al-Kassah’s face froze for a heartbeat in a mask of bewilderment, then he began to laugh thunderously and clapped Indiana on the shoulder with such power as to ram a tele-graph pole into the ground.

“You have not really changed. Still the same brash sayings on your lips.” He was holding his belly with laughter.

“But you’re lucky, Dr. Indiana Jones. I like that. I bid you welcome to my humble shop.”

Indiana rubbed his aching shoulder.

“You haven’t forgotten me?” he asked unnecessarily.

“How could I?” He motioned Indiana to the counter, behind which he had come forth. “The thought of you will haunt me to the grave. Do you know what damage you’ve inflicted on me? Not only did you take from me an invaluable artifact…”

“That had been reported stolen.”

“…and put one of my best customers in jail, where he remains today…”

“He was wanted for a double murder.”

“…but you also did something that I can never forgive in my whole life.” He took a deep breath. His voice grew sharp. “You led the secret police squad that was chasing you directly to my business. Their snooping almost ruined me! From top to bottom, my shop was turned on its head.”

Indiana pointed with a sweeping gesture to the expensive decor. “Well, you hardly starved to death!”

“Absolutely. *That* I did not. But it cost me a lot of money to — let’s say — grease the wheels of the police investigation.” His mouth was smiling again, but Indiana saw that his eyes were cold and

calculating. Indy was not the type to be fooled by the boisterous, intimidatingly beefy trader. Al-Kassah was a man who would step over a pile of dead bodies without thinking twice, if it benefited him.

Many of his competitors had been found with their throats cut. Maybe he hadn't personally wielded the knife, but it was certainly done on his behalf. "So, I am all the more happy that you have come to settle your debts!"

"Wait a minute!" Indiana interrupted quickly. "There's no question. If you weren't running a crooked business, you wouldn't have gotten in the slightest trouble. You blame me for that?"

"There is no straight business or crooked business, there is only good business or bad business," he instructed Indiana in the basics of his business ethics. "But if that is not the reason you came, then why? Is a secret police squad again after you, so you rush to the nearest shop full of peace-loving citizens?"

When he heard "peace-loving citizens" Indiana raised his eyebrows. If Al-Kassah was referring to himself, Attila was a pioneer of Social Democracy.

"Don't worry!" he assured. "This time I just need information. I need to know whether a particular person is in town."

Al-Kassah had a cold look.

"Does this look like a tourist office?" he asked sullenly.

"Don't be modest! I don't know anyone who knows more about what goes on in this city."

Al-Kassah made a vague gesture.

"Well, one cannot help but hear this or that, of course,"

he confessed. "Who knows, maybe I can indeed offer you something. Who is it?"

"Professor Basil Smith. I heard that he's supposed to be in Istanbul, or at least was, recently." He watched his words, careful not to reveal more than he absolutely had to. Innocently, he shrugged. "Since I happen to be here too, I thought maybe I could meet with him and drink to old times."

"Quite a coincidence, I'm sure." Al-Kassah made clear what he thought of the story. "How stupid do you think I am? In these troubled times, no one just happens to be in Istanbul." He looked warily at Indy. "So why are you here?"

It didn't surprise Indiana that the dealer had seen through him. A master of negotiation such as Al-Kassah had to be constantly on

guard.

"Like I said," he answered. "It's a purely social get-together."

"But of course," laughed Al-Kassah. He moved to knock Indiana on the shoulder again, but this time Indy dodged.

"Two of the most famous archaeologists of the modern age want to meet, and you're telling me that they just want to chat about old times! Come on, what are you up to?"

Indiana looked him straight in the eye.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said after a moment, making it clear that he was not prepared to say more.

Al-Kassah was thus finally satisfied — at least he appeared so.

"Professor Basil Smith, then," he muttered. He ran his fingers thoughtfully over his jet-black beard and did not reveal whether he knew anything about the professor.

"Well," persisted Indy, as the Syrian made no attempt to talk. "Do you know something?"

Al-Kassah jerked. He seemed to have decided. His gaze fell on Indiana.

"It all depends," he replied slowly.

"On what?"

He spread his arms out jovially.

"You disappoint me, Indiana Jones! On whether the price is right, of course!"

"Fine," growled Indiana. He could have guessed the dealer's ultimate intentions. "How much?"

"No, not like that," the tall Syrian decided, grinning.

"That is no fun. We will negotiate. Just like real business-men." He ran to the other side of the counter, pulled out a slim, copper vase and placed it right on the glass top.

"Here, for example, look at this vase! Is it not a beautiful piece?"

"Nice," said Indiana, after his eyes had glimpsed the piece. "But what I do with it? I want to know something about Smith, and I really don't need a worthless vase."

Al-Kassah laughed.

"It's very simple. No vase, no information."

"What is this game? Couldn't we negotiate something less time-consuming?"

"No vase, no..."

"...no information, I heard you the first time." Indiana sighed and swallowed the remark, which left a bad taste in his mouth. He had to play the game. If the dealer was going to insist — why not? He had the information and could therefore dictate the rules. And as long as there were only a little haggling...

But then it crossed his mind, what if Al-Kassah knew nothing about Smith, but was only bluffing to take advantage of him? The Syrian was quite capable of that. But what else could he do but go ahead with the trade? He decided to be cautious. "You have persuaded me," he said.

"How much do you want for the vase?"

"How about — let's say..." Al-Kassah took it in his hand, pretending he was examining it as an expert. "A hundred dollars?"

"A hundred dollars?" blurted Indiana. The vase was neither antique nor valuable. It was probably mass produced at some factory here in Turkey. Cheap junk for tourists. "This thing isn't worth more than five dollars.

If that."

Al-Kassah smiled indulgently.

"Of course, it is not worth more than a few dollars," he admitted, as it were the most natural thing in the world.

"But you, Indiana Jones, get the special price for friends of the house."

"Then I don't want to know what your enemies have to pay!"

The eyes of the Syrian were hard.

"You can learn nothing, if you prefer," he hissed and immediately began to smile again. "Remember, it's not just the vase itself that determines the price. Look closely and see it is filled with the answers to your questions."

"Even then it isn't worth a hundred dollars." Indiana considered briefly. "I'll offer you ten."

"Ten?" Al-Kassah replied in a tone as if he had just learned that he was an alien born on the planet Melmac, abandoned here on earth as a baby. But his voice betrayed that he was merely in the middle of an Arab trading ritual.

The first round had been initiated. "Will you drive me into bankruptcy? I will be the mockery of all the dealers here in Istanbul? No, this is totally unacceptable."

"Well, then twenty!"

“Twenty?” he repeated, no less appalled. “You want to insult me? You are ungrateful, Indiana Jones! I offer you my help selflessly, and you reject my outstretched hand of reconciliation.” The Syrian trader was running rings, rhetorically. “But because it’s you — ninety-five!”

Indy also increased by five, which Al-Kassah met with a renewed howling, rolling his eyes, then reduced his offer five dollars, and so on, until a quarter of an hour later they had finally agreed to seventy-five dollars. The dealer was a damn tough one. But at least the game was over.

He took the sum from his wallet and regretted it immediately, allowing Al-Kassah to see how much money he had with him. He tightened his lips. It was probably just what the old devil had intended with all the dramatics.

“All right,” he said after he had given him the money.

“Now I bought your vase. How about that information?

Where can I find Basil Smith?”

Al-Kassah crossed the thick fingers of his hands together and put his hands on the bulge of his huge belly.

“I cannot tell you, Indiana Jones,” he said, and only confirmed Indy’s fears that the dealer had been bluffing the whole time when he said: “I do not even know if he is still in the city. But he *was* here.”

“When?”

“About two months ago. It may be that he is still in Istanbul, but if so he has disappeared without a trace. I certainly have not heard from him since.”

Indiana nodded thoughtfully. He had thought so. Smith must have been in trouble. And big trouble at that, if he had called all the way to America for help.

“You don’t know by chance where he was staying?”

“In some hotel, I suppose. But do not ask me which one.” And ironically, added Al-Kassah: “If I had known you would come asking about him, I would have found out, of course.”

“One more thing — what did Basil Smith want here in Istanbul?”

Al-Kassah raised his bushy eyebrows.

“A strange question for someone who only wants to talk about old times.”

“Don’t get cute!” Indiana pointed to the vase. “Business is business. Did you forget our little deal?”

“All right. Since you really want to know. Smith has made quite a stir. He talked about it, a great mystery close to being solved. A sensational discovery as the world has never seen.”

“A great mystery?” repeated Indiana. Slowly, he realized why Al-Kassah was so eager to know more about the reasons for his quest to learn about Smith — he thought that it involved an archaeological project. And, Indiana had to concede, perhaps his assessment wasn’t wrong. All of a sudden the whole thing appeared to him in a different light. Perhaps Basil Smith didn’t need his help for an emergency, but his expertise for a expedition. But then why wouldn’t he share his address? “So what was it?”

Instead of answering, Al-Kassah stooped, pulled out a small, thumb-sized bottle from under the counter and set it next to the vase on the glass top.

“Won’t you have a look at this? I can imagine that you will want to buy it as well, perhaps.”

“What is this?” Indiana said indignantly. “You said you’d answer my questions when I bought the vase. And I did. Are you true to your word or not?”

“Sure,” admitted Al-Kassah. “But as you may remember, I never promised to give you *all* the answers to *all* the questions.”

His smug grin angered Indiana, but he held himself in check. It was something he had to expect. He looked suspiciously at the small, clear bottle. It looked like a perfume bottle, half filled with a fine black powder.

“What is it anyway?” he asked.

“This is black lotus,” the dealer whispered with a mysterious voice, as if it were forbidden to speak the name aloud. “The essence of the deepest jungles of Africa. It is said that a small pinch of it brings the most beautiful dreams you can imagine. However, just a little too much of it can be cause the worst nightmares. Or you may fall into a deathlike torpor.”

Indiana sniffed.

“What do I do with it? I’m not interested in drugs!”

“It is much more than just a drug.” Al-Kassah shrugged.

“But I do not want to force you to do anything. You do not have to buy the bottle.” He pointed to the front door. “You are always free to take your vase and leave the store…”

“All right,” groaned Indiana. “How much?”

The Syrian thought for a moment.

“Two hundred dollars!”

This was the gong for the second round. After quarter of an hour haggling Indiana was poorer by a further one hundred and fifty U.S. dollars. The second round went to Al-Kassah!

“Now that that’s behind us,” Indiana said, looking skeptically at the vial containing the powder before tucking it into his jacket. Who knew, maybe after he returned to the United States, some research laboratory could determine the composition of the powder. He’d be surprised if it wasn’t just rubbed charcoal, because that’s what it looked like. He couldn’t bear to think of it: a thimble full of worthless wood charcoal — for the price of one hundred fifty dollars. “What and where was this mystery Smith sought?”

“Believe me, if I knew that, I would not be here, but on my way there!” said Al-Kassah. “I can only say that Smith made some fantastic promises to prospective donors, trying to fund his expedition. Exactly where, he told no one.

Apparently he had found some evidence in an old private library in Bursa. And he spoke of unbelievable treasures.”

Al-Kassah paused. “But nobody believed him enough to risk their money. It had become common knowledge that his most recent undertakings all ended in failure and financial fiasco.”

Indiana nodded. That explained why news of the professor had been so quiet in recent years.

“Such an expedition is not something you can put together in no time. Smith must have planned how many people he needed, what equipment and so on.”

“Surely he would have done that. But you forget that I did not even speak with him, but only learned about it indirectly. Stop, wait! I just remembered, after all, he said where the expedition was to be, namely Egypt.”

“Egypt?”

“That’s it.”

It was all too much to digest, but Indiana had to think carefully. It seemed like a jigsaw puzzle, to which he had found a few new parts, but did not have the faintest idea how they fit together.

“And that’s all you know?” He asked for safety’s sake.

“Now I know a little more yet, but…” Al-Kassah again ducked under the counter and pulled out a brass plate.

Indy took a quick look at it.

"Four hundred," he estimated, "right?"

"Right," confirmed Al-Kassah, nodding approvingly. "You learn quickly."

Indiana did not want to play this game any longer. More-over, he lacked the money. He took with a quick lunge over the counter, grabbed the Syrian by the collar of his precious caftan, and pulled him down until their heads were on the same level.

"If you thought I had unlimited patience," he hissed,

"you've been fooling yourself. No more games. Instead, you tell me what you know."

Al-Kassah, not the least impressed, contorted his face into a grin.

"You should not have done that, Indiana Jones," he said with a quiet menace, his eyes falling on the hands that held his caftan tight. "You do and say anything you please, but you have gone too far! Now I will *really* skin you alive."

"Too bad I won't give you the chance!" Indy responded in exactly the same tone.

"You don't think so? Take a look around!"

Indiana turned his head slowly, first to the right, then to the left, and what he saw made him pessimistic about surviving the next few minutes. The locals who populated the shop had rushed in and surrounded him. Grimly determined, they stared at him, while their hands rested threateningly on the handles of their daggers. It seemed as if they were waiting for just a flick of Al-Kassah's finger. Indiana realized that when he had entered the store earlier, he'd made a small error in reasoning. The locals weren't customers. They were all employees, and specifically, the Syrian's guards. How could he have missed that! A man with as many enemies as Al-Kassah had to protect himself against the inevitable attack or two.

He forced a smile, letting go of the dealer's robe and trying to smooth out wrinkles he had made in it.

"Well, uh, it seems as if I let my temper get the best of me." He patted the dealer on the shoulder appeasingly.

"Well, it was nice to have seen you again after all these years here, buddy. I'll see myself out. I really must be going. Have a nice day!"

He turned toward the door, intending to try, somewhat hopelessly, to walk by the guards, but the sharp voice of Al-Kassah stopped him.

“Did you not forget a little something, Indiana Jones?”

He slowly turned around and looked at the dealer innocently.

“What do you mean?” He tried to stall.

Al-Kassah grabbed the vase on the counter and held it out to Indy.

“This beautiful piece, of course,” he said in a fatherly tone. “You spent a lot of money on it, so you should take it with you.”

“Uh, if you say so…” Confused, Indy took the vase.

“Like I said, have a nice day. Maybe I’ll stop by again sometime.”

He took a few steps toward the exit, but the men who surrounded him blocked his path.

Behind him, Al-Kassah roared in laughter.

“Did you really think I would let you go?” he cried.

“How stupid do you think I am? Do you think I am the type to make empty threats? No, Indiana Jones, this time I will grab you by the collar. My men will teach you a lesson you will remember all your life.”

From the corner of his eye, Indiana sized up the situation. None of the few genuine customers seemed to take any interest in what was happening to him. Apparently they thought it was one of the usual Oriental trading rituals. In front of a shelf a few yards away, he saw a European, obviously one of those would-be experts interested in an old gun from the first World War, staring down the barrel as if there was something fascinating to discover inside.

Help was nowhere in sight.

“Believe me, any insult was not intentional,” Indy assured the dealer. “I didn’t mean anything… uh… personal, so to speak. I’m exhausted from the journey. I made a mistake.”

The stuttering apology did not impress Al-Kassah.

“Is that all you have to offer me?” he asked sympathetically. “It’s a little pathetic. I assumed that you could come up with something a bit more original. Oh well…”

He raised his hand to give his men the sign.

Indiana took another look at the European, who had just turned questioningly toward him — apparently to inquire about the price of the gun.

“Well, you asked for it!” Indy called out, suddenly inspired. He attempted a superior smile, imitating the pompous air of European tourists. “*Of course* I didn’t come alone.

Here's my partner. And I'm warning you! One wrong move, and he'll blow your head off."

The European started to back away, frightened, when he suddenly noticed the dozen grim-looking faces staring at him intently, as if they wanted to slit his belly. In fright, he dropped the weapon. When it hit the ground, it fired a shot with a loud bang.

Indiana took advantage of the moment of confusion, shoving aside the two nearest men and rushing toward the exit. Just as it looked like he would pull off a miraculous escape, another man stepped in front of him. But instead of tackling the fugitive, he reached for the dagger in his belt.

He did not have time to draw it, though, because Indiana smacked the bulbous end of the metal vase into his chin, hurling him backward to the ground. Indiana climbed over the man, the scrambled to his feet and threw open the front door. So, the vase was good for something after all.

How fortunate that Al-Kassah had reminded him not to leave it behind!

"Curse you idiots!" the dealer yelled. "Get moving!

After him!"

Indiana ran out into the street and paused for a moment, unsure whether to go left or right. While he was stopped, a rickety old truck with an open cargo bed pulled away right in front of him. He ran after it and tried to jump into the back, just as Al-Kassah's men rushed out the door behind him. One hand caught the rear fender, and in the next moment a murderous jerk nearly pulled his arm from his shoulder socket, as the truck changed direction and yanked him along. For a moment, he hung on the rear of the vehicle, while his feet dragged through the dust behind him, before he managed to climb onto the platform.

Breathing heavily, he sat still and thanked the fates that had sent him the truck at that very moment. It had saved him from a tiresome chase through the crowded streets with an uncertain outcome. When he straightened up and looked back, he saw Al-Kassah's men following the truck, cursing wildly, but not threatening to catch up.

He took a deep breath. *That* was that! Though if that European hadn't been playing around with the gun back in the store…

Just at that moment, he was pulled forward and landed hard on the platform floor. The truck driver had slammed on the brakes

suddenly. The move had less to do with the stowaway on the bed behind him than with with the congested street in front of him, Indiana noted, taking in the view of his surroundings after the truck had stopped fully. And it wasn't clear when it would be able to start again.

Al-Kassah's men would reach the truck if it stayed here, that much was clear. He wanted to jump off the platform and escape into the fray when he spotted the large sign hanging from the second floor of a nearby wall, just five feet above the cab. The Arabic letters must have been some sort of advertisement, but more importantly for Indy, its wooden construction seemed sturdy enough to carry a man.

With a leap he landed on the roof of the cabin and, ignoring the outraged cry of the driver, pulled himself up onto the billboard. From there, he pulled himself on to the outside wall of the nearby house. He was almost home free when the first of the Syrian dealer's guards reached the back of the truck, climbing on it in pursuit. Meanwhile, the road was clear again, so the driver stepped on the gas.

Half of the men fell back on the road in the dust as the truck pulled away, while those who had been able to hold on stayed aboard the truck, protesting as it carried them toward the city center.

Indiana pulled himself up onto the flat roof above the wall. He looked toward the road, where the truck had been, where the fallen men stared back at him in anger and helplessness. One of them ran into the house, but by the time he climbed the stairs Indiana would have long since escaped over the adjacent roofs.

"My best regards to Al-Kassah!" he yelled down cheerfully, then turned and disappeared.

* * *

"No, I'm very sorry, sir," said the graying MARIOTT hotel porter, "no guest named Basil Smith has ever stayed with us."

Indy touched the brim of his hat.

"Too bad," he sighed. "Thanks anyway."

He left the lobby and started walking down the road to the next hotel. He had given up on taxis because he wanted to stretch his remaining money. If Basil Smith was really no longer in Istanbul and he could not figure out his current location, he would have a hard

time making it back to States on the few dollars he had left. Al-Kassah, that leech, had taken nearly all but the shirt off his back.

Indy winced. But he now possessed a worthless vase that in a pinch functioned fairly well as a baseball bat. And, he couldn't forget the vial of ominous powder. Probably just as worthless. All in all, not such a great trade.

It was evening. He had been at it for more than ten hours, but it could have just as easily been two days as far as his aching feet were concerned. He had scoured one hotel after another, concentrating on the better establish-ments. Basil Smith was used to an exclusive lifestyle, dining in the finest restaurants and staying only in first class hotels. Such habits were difficult to break. However, it was an equation with many unknowns. If the professor truly had been down on his luck in recent years, as Al-Kassah had said, then perhaps he had run out of funds. Then he'd probably have to stay at a third-rate flophouse. Of which Istanbul had thousands.

After a quarter-hour Indiana reached the next hotel, the REGENCY, and stepped into the stately furnished lobby, his confidence dwindling. He had seen many such reception halls in the past few hours. They all somehow exuded the same elegance and cool atmosphere, whether in the ASTORIA, SHERATON, ADMIRAL, EXCELSIOR, ABU

SIMBEL, HILTON or whatever other name hung above the entrance. They were the gateway to an unreal world that was normally closed to mere mortals. The rooms were expensive, perhaps here most of all.

When he entered their sanctuary, the condescending glances thrown in his direction by the distinguished door-men, decked out in their spotless uniforms, were the same everywhere. They gave him the feeling that with his somewhat shabby clothes — his preferred adventuring outfit —

he fit into this picture of perfection like a black person at a Ku Klux Klan rally. No one was was ever rude to him, exactly, but he felt that they wouldn't trust him even to take the kitchen waste out to the trash. And in every instance, the answer he got was the same: *I'm sorry, a guest named Basil Smith has never stayed with us!* He'd heard it so many times he had memorized it.

"Basil Smith? But of course! We have a suite booked under that name!"

Indiana, who had been ready to turn around with the obligatory thank you, needed a few seconds to realize that the clerk of the REGENCY had responded positively to his question.

“What? Did you just say Smith is staying here?”

The porter raised his eyebrows as if it were the most ridiculous question he had ever heard.

“There is no question, sir.” In view of the filthy, dilapidated figure before him, the “sir” did not come easily to his lips. “Right now, however, he is unfortunately not in the building, Mr.... — ah, what was your name again?”

“Jones,” Indiana replied automatically.

The porter’s eyebrows crept up a little further.

“Mr. Jones?” he asked, raising then furrowing his brow.

He leafed through the guest book that lay before him on the table, and shortly found what he was looking for. “Mr.

Indiana Jones?” he read.

“That’s right!”

The smugness in his face melted into a more submis-sive expression.

“Then may I be the first to welcome you to the REGENCY, sir. The suite is at your disposal.”

“The suite?” Indy asked, irritated.

“Of course, sir! Mr. Smith is extremely sorry that he was not able to receive you personally. He asks that you wait for him.” He reached behind him to the board where the keys hung and handed Indiana a key attached to a magnificent pendant with the number “42” engraved on it in gold. “Mr. Smith is staying in the next building,”

he explained, looking past Indiana and clapping his hands quickly. “The page will bring up your luggage.”

“That won’t be necessary,” Indiana offered in his defense. He lifted up the vase. “This is my only luggage.

And I can carry it myself.”

“Well, uh, as you wish, sir,” replied the porter, sending the page away. He pointed to the carpeted stairs. “Second floor, right side.”

Indy thanked him and left him there. When he turned on the landing he looked behind him and saw that the porter had picked up the phone and was whispering into it. He was probably telling a colleague about the arrival of a madman who was on a world tour

with a vase. Indiana smiled and continued up the stairs. His mood had improved considerably over the last few minutes.

It seemed as if most of his problems had simply disappeared into thin air. His fears about the professor had apparently been completely unfounded. If Basil Smith was officially residing in a luxury hotel, his situation could not be as dangerous as previously thought. And there was another positive development: Indiana would not have to go searching for the cheapest dive he could find. Now he had a luxurious suite with all the comforts one could want. After his struggles the last few days, he longed for a tub of hot water and a large bar of soap. The barges that had brought him to Istanbul had many things, but not much for wash-ing up. The elderly lady walking toward him turned her nose up and strutted to the other side of the wide staircase with an expression of pure disdain — and the feeling was mutual, as Indy had to believe her perfume violated any number of chemical weapons bans.

He held his breath and picked up his pace. On the second floor, he turned right and walked down the hall to door number “42.” He stopped as he attempted to insert the key into the lock. The door was unlocked, but ajar. Probably an oversight by the staff.

He entered the semi-darkness of the suite and fumbled for the light switch, when a shadowy figure appeared, standing at least a head taller than he did.

Instinctively, he ducked, dodging under the blow that had been aimed at his chin. He grabbed the arm of the attacker and took advantage of his momentum, overturn-ing him with a clever twist of his shoulder. The man fell forward and crashed upside down with a thud against the wall.

From the darkness, a second form, no less tall or broad, rose up to meet him.

Indiana remembered the vase in his hand, held it out as a tennis racket, and practiced his backhand on the head of this new attacker. The man rolled his eyes and fell to his knees in slow motion. He remained in this unstable position a few moments before he collapsed.

His companion had taken the time to recover as best he could. He jumped out of a crouch with hands outstretched toward Indiana, but before he could get a grip his head made the acquaintance of a well-placed boot heel. The man fell to the ground and lay still.

Except for Indiana's panting, there was total silence.

He peered into the gloom, but could make out no more enemies. Cautiously, he turned on the light: the two men were the only ones involved in the ambush.

But — why?

He turned one of them face-up with his foot and examined the impression of his boot heel on the distinctly Turkish face. He was a burly man with a beard, dressed in the typical native garb. The same was true for his companion.

Indiana took a moment to think. Who had sent the two?

Al-Kassah? Had the dealer known that Smith was staying at the REGENCY, and that there was a suite reserved under Indiana's name? If Al-Kassah had been able to figure that out, he must have known that Indiana would sooner or later find his way here. The two scoundrels could have been sent to wait for him. Or were they working on behalf of someone who was actually after the professor?

He noted that the two men were armed with curved daggers. Since they had not used, they must not have been instructed to kill him. No, they meant simply to overwhelm him. He frowned. This meant either that they intended to take him somewhere, or that he should expect another visit soon. At this point in his train of thought, someone crashed through the door of the suite. He spun around and saw a figure with a gun rush into the room.

"Don't worry!" cried a high, squeaky voice. "I'll save you. You have nothing to fear… aaaaaah!"

Mid-sentence, the figure stumbled over one of the downed men and belly-flopped to the ground in front of Indiana.

The gun slid toward him: he stopped it with his right foot.

Speechless, he stared at the small, frail figure who stood before him, and did not know whether to laugh or cry. The young, red-haired boy was barely five-foot-five-inches tall and was wearing a mottled gray suit that made him seem like a child. Half blind, he fumbled for his glasses, which he had fallen from his freckled nose. He took the glasses and put them on with an awkward movement. Irritated, he blinked and saw what it was he had tripped over.

"Oh," he said. "I'm sorry! I see that you had to deal with these two by yourself, unfortunately."

Indiana thought he had misheard the young man. Did this guy actually say *unfortunately*?

“You should be sorry,” Indiana replied sarcastically. “If I had known that help was on the way, I would have left at least one of them for you.”

The guy nodded, appreciatively.

“Ah yes, I understand!” he said seriously. He straightened his collar and dusted off his suit, as if he had fallen on the dirty road and not on a clean carpet, then looked up to Indiana with an expression of undisguised admiration.

“You actually appear much the way I imagined you! I guess there is nothing that you can’t handle. We’re cut from the same cloth, you and I. We may not be much to look at, but we’re fearless as can be.” He expected agreement, but Indiana just stared at him, struggling to come up with a single word that would be appropriate in such a bizarre situation.

“Well, at least I’m working on it,” he added. He cleared his throat and looked pleadingly at Indiana’s right boot, which was still on the gun. “Uh, I think you’re stepping on my gun. If I could perhaps get it back…?”

Indiana took a deep breath and put his hands on his hips.

“Would it be asking too much,” said he ruled, “if you tell me first what this is all about?”

“Yeah, uh… I mean, no.” Desperately, he added: “I just wanted to…”

“I know,” Indy murmured dismissively, lowering his eyebrows. “Save me. But how did you know that these guys were waiting for me? Who sent them? And — above all — who are you?”

The boy’s eyes widened.

“Oh, haven’t I mentioned? How careless of me. You may not know me…” He ran his right palm over his coat-tail, and extended his hand to Indiana. “Then may I introduce myself. This should explain everything adequately.

My name is Smith!”

Indy frowned. Wait a minute! He had asked the doorman about *Basil* Smith. Had there been some sort of mix-up? But then why would this guy know him — or pretended to know him, anyway?

“Smith?” he asked, ignoring the offered hand.

“Exactly,” agreed the young man. “Raymond Smith.”

He looked at his hand, irritated, as if wondering why he kept it extended. “Uh, like I said, I’m pleased to make your acquaintance.”

The name Raymond rang a bell in Indiana's head, but he couldn't quite place it. Thus he could think of nothing better than to ask the obvious.

"Raymond Smith? The porter said that a Basil Smith was staying here."

"This is true. I booked the suite under my father's name."

"Your father? So you are…?"

Of course! Basil's son. Indiana remembered that the professor had once mentioned that his son lived in a boarding school in England. He had even taken the opportunity to show a photo of him. The fact that Indy did not immediately remember might have been because the Raymond in the picture had been a small child of six or seven years (and though the Raymond now before him was obviously older, he left the impression that he was far from becoming an adult). But there was something else that he remembered. In the photo next to Raymond had been a little girl with white-blond braids. That's right, Basil had not only a son but a daughter about the same age. As she had been called…? He couldn't remember.

"Raymond, it's me, Liz!" cried a shrill voice from the corridor. "Are you there? I heard noise, and I thought…"

The surprised voice trailed off as its source reached the door. Indiana had not the slightest doubt. This was Basil's daughter. Elizabeth, who went by Liz. Instead of the long braids that she had in the picture, she wore her hair short, emphasizing her narrow face and high cheek bones. Her simple dress showed off the young woman's petite figure.

At first glance she seemed vulnerable, but her eyes blazed with a strong will. Basil would be proud of her.

"… What is going on here?" she asked, after sizing up the situation.

Raymond used his still extended hand to gesture toward Indiana.

"This is Dr. Jones," he said. "Don't you understand?

He's here! He has finally come!"

Liz turned to Indiana's and looked at him as if she were a fruit merchant appraising a partially rotten piece of fruit.

"So this is the illustrious doctor," she said. "Looks more like a bum to me."

Indiana opened his mouth to protest, but Raymond beat him to it:

“But Liz! He’s the greatest archaeologist in the world!”

Not the least bit impressed, she sighed “Uh huh…” and flashed her brother an insolent look. “Up until yesterday, you claimed our father was the greatest archaeologist in the world.”

Flustered, Raymond took a moment to find the right words.

“That’s true,” he conceded. “Then Dr. Jones is only the *second* greatest archaeologist in the world. But he’s the only one who can help us.”

She wrinkled her nose.

“It’s hard to believe when he looks like that!”

Indiana tried again to interject, but Raymond didn’t let him.

“You should have seen how he dealt with these two Turks!” He stopped himself and smiled a little uncertainly.

“Uh, not that I saw it, either. He took care of both of them before I showed up. Piece of cake!” He emphasized the last words with a gesture, as if striking a nail into the wall.

Liz gazed at the two figures on the floor and gave her brother a reproachful look.

“So you actually went through with your crazy plan and got these two to go along with it. Serves you right that it backfired on you!”

“Well yes, but we now know that Dr. Jones has excellent reflexes…”

“Wait a minute!” Indiana interrupted sharply. He stared at Raymond accusingly. “Did I hear that right? *You* sent these two guys to bash my head in?”

“For God’s sake, no,” Raymond shouted in alarm. “They wouldn’t have gone that far, of course. They were just trying to give you a little bit of trouble.”

“*What?* ”

“Well, what can I say…?” Raymond studied his shoes, which he scraped on the carpet. “I thought if you got in a tough spot and I showed up to help you out… Maybe you would be more willing to help us.”

Indiana couldn’t believe it. This lad had hired the two Turks, so he could pretend to be a great hero. Good Lord, was he caught in a madhouse? His eyes turned to Liz.

“Don’t look at me!” she said harshly, throwing up her hands. “It was entirely his idea. I had nothing to do with it.”

Indiana took a deep breath and slowly counted to ten in his mind. Just keep cool! After all, these were the children of the man to whom he owed his life.

"How did you know that I would arrive this evening?"

he asked Raymond. "Or did you pay those men to keep watch night and day?"

"Of course not," he replied. "I paid a few guys at the port to keep an eye out for you and send word when you arrived."

Indiana remembered. The locals, whose eyes he had felt on his back this morning! He had the same feeling before in the hall, when the porter had picked up the phone.

He must have been calling Raymond.

"I hope you won't get the wrong idea," Raymond said sheepishly.

"I don't know what idea I'm supposed to get," Indiana responded coolly. "Let's see what your father has to say about all this nonsense. Where is he, anyway, and when can I meet him?"

Raymond and Liz exchanged a look that he could not interpret.

"I'm afraid," Raymond said with a sigh, "You unfortunately might have… uh… some false assumptions."

"I don't think so! Your father sent me a telegram saying that I was urgently needed here. So he will probably be anxious to speak to me."

"That's not quite right. The truth is — how shall I say? — a little different." Raymond looked for help in his sister's eyes, but found none there.

A monstrous thought occurred to Indiana, but he refused to pursue the idea.

"And just how is the truth a little different?" he shouted angrily. "Come on, out with it! Don't make me beat it out of you!"

"Well," Raymond formulated carefully, "what if it wasn't our father who sent you that telegram?"

That was it!

"Not your father?" he repeated in disbelief. "All right, but… then who?" He continued the thought silently: Who besides Basil Smith knew about their experience in Yucatan?

"It was us," said Liz, adding pointedly: "You're not too quick to catch on, are you!"

He wondered what he had gotten himself into. This revelation from the Basil children made him want to put them over his knee and spank them thoroughly. Especially that snarky Liz.

“I’m warning you!” She raised a threatening finger, as if she could read his mind — which probably wasn’t hard to do, given his expression. “No violence! I’ll scream if you touch either of us!”

Involuntarily, Indiana had almost gone off on the two.

He forced himself to relax — not that it was easy for him.

“Who do you think I am?” He turned away, feigning outrage. “Do you think I’d attack the defenseless?”

Liz glared at him as if that was exactly what she expected from him. It made him even angrier. They had tricked him into voyaging halfway around the world and sent two thugs after him, and then dared to accuse him of unfairly attacking them.

“I think we owe you an explanation,” Raymond tried to mediate.

“I think so too,” growled Indiana. “For starters, how did you know about the incident in Yucatan?”

“My father has often spoken of you, and he told us about that.” Raymond looked pleadingly at Indiana. “Believe us, we debated a great deal about whether we should send the telegram in his name. But we simply couldn’t see any other way. We were afraid that maybe you wouldn’t come otherwise. And you’re the only one who can help us.”

Indiana had to admit that there was something to the kid’s reasoning. Had he known the telegram wasn’t from Basil Smith, he probably wouldn’t have felt it necessary to jump overboard in Casablanca (but on the other hand, considering the prospect of a long journey in Grisswald’s company, he might have used any message as an excuse to to do just that — even if it had been just a picture postcard from one of his students).

“And why do you need my help?” he asked.

“To find our father.”

“Yes,” added Liz. The sparkle in her eyes was gone, replaced by a glassy stare, straight through Indiana. “He called us to Istanbul, but when we arrived, he had disappeared without a trace. And then a few weeks ago, the British Embassy told us that he was dead. But that can’t be right! I just know that it’s not true!” She clenched her fist. “We called in a favor for our father because you said you owed him. But I guess you didn’t mean it.” Her eyes were glistening, and she turned away. “We’ll find him without you! And we’ll reimburse your travel expenses, of course.”

She rose from her seat and started toward the door.

“Wait, not so fast!” Indiana called after her. “Just hold on!”

As angry as he was at the pair, he suddenly understood, and almost felt sorry for them. They hadn’t brought him here as a prank, but only because they needed help. It was clear Liz was genuinely concerned for her father. He had to admit that if he were in their shoes, he probably wouldn’t have acted any differently. Liz’s words also reminded him of something: he did owe Basil Smith. Did it matter whether he asked for the favor or his children asked for him?

She stopped and wiped a hand across her eyes before she turned to face him.

“Will you help us?” she asked with a voice that made it clear she was fighting back tears.

“Before I decide, I want to hear the whole story.” When he saw that Raymond had already opened his mouth to start explaining, he shook his head: “No. Not now! Now I’m going to take a bath and think all this over in peace.

I’ll be ready in an hour or so.”

Raymond nodded eagerly.

“Of course, you’re right. How about if we meet in an hour at the restaurant downstairs. Naturally, you’ll be our guest. You look like you could use something to eat.”

“That’s not all I could use,” growled Indiana.

“I’ll have the hotel tailor send some decent clothes to the suite,” said Liz, who had regained her self-assured tone.

“You can’t go to the restaurant looking like that.”

“Don’t worry about me. I feel quite comfortable in these clothes. They’ve seen me through many adventures.”

“And they certainly look it! Wouldn’t you think a big hero like you could wash them at least once every five or six adventures?”

Indiana felt his sympathy vanish. If he didn’t respond with the same vitriol, it was only because he suspected that Liz’s rude behavior hid truly troubled feelings. At least, he hoped that explained it.

“What do I care. Do whatever you want!” He raised his voice: “Now get out of here!” He went to the bathroom door, as if the matter were settled. Just then he stopped and pointed at the two motionless figures on the ground.

“And these two thugs better be gone when I come out of the bathroom. They don’t fit with the décor.”

He slammed the door behind him.

"Well, if you ask me," he heard Liz's muffled voice penetrate through the door. "I don't think we should count on this uncouth bully's help. He doesn't take us seriously."

"But, Liz!" Raymond defended him. "He's our only hope. If anyone can help, he can. After all, he is..."

"... the second greatest archaeologist in the world, I know. But I would have never thought that our father would need help from someone like him..."

Indiana shook his head and turned on the faucet, and the roar of the water drowned out every other word.

* * *

When Indiana came out of the bathroom, the two thugs were gone. Liz had picked up a suit for him, freshly ironed and hanging on the back of the chair. It was made of cashmere wool or similar fabric, and the note said that its smooth style would make him look sixty-two years younger.

Indiana sniffed. Nice to know which age bracket Liz put him in.

Out of spite, he crumpled the suit into a ball and instead put on his usual attire. Liz could go to hell! This insolent brat couldn't boss him around — even if she were the daughter of ten professors! He left only his leather hat in the room. Even he felt that wouldn't be proper.

Five minutes later, he was in the lobby. As he approached the entrance to the dining room, an employee of the hotel blocked his way.

"Excuse me, sir," he said to him discreetly, making a face as if he found the whole thing mildly embarrassing.

"But in this attire, I unfortunately cannot allow you in the dining room. It's formal dress only. I'm sorry, but that's our policy."

Indiana grabbed the man by the collar and pulled him close.

"Listen, pal," he hissed softly. "In the last few days, I've escaped a dozen rampaging Bedouins, I've had to deal with bumbling bureaucrats, I've been shot at by German fighter pilots in the Mediterranean Sea, and just this morning I escaped a murderous antique dealer and was attacked here in this hotel by two Turks." He took a deep breath and gestured with his free hand toward the

entrance to the dining room. “Do you really think you can stop me, now, from going in there?”

“No, sir, most certainly not,” croaked the man, intimidated. “It was just a… a stupid mistake.”

Indiana released him.

“Very good, then,” he said and walked into the dining room. Basil’s children were already seated at the table.

Raymond jumped up and waved to him as if he were competing with a windmill.

“Mr. Jones!” he shouted unnecessarily. “Mr. Jones!

Here! Here we are!”

He walked over to their table, ignoring the judgmental glances thrown at him by the festively attired guests (despite the fact that he had even shaved for the occasion).

“I see you refuse to look like a civilized man,” Liz remarked tartly as he reached the table. “But very well, if you absolutely must… Do sit down, or do you intend to stand around forever?”

Indiana felt an urge to turn around and take his leave.

Nevertheless, he took a seat.

“I think you’re forgetting something!” he said, raising his index finger. “I don’t want anything from you, but you want something from me. Don’t you think you should at least be polite?”

“Please, Liz,” Raymond pleaded, looking at his sister.

“Mr. Jones is right. You should behave yourself.”

“And quite apart from the two thugs that you sent to my room,” added Indiana, when he saw that Liz was refrain-ing from comment, “it wasn’t easy getting here. Perhaps you’ve heard there’s a Second World War?”

He probably shouldn’t have said that.

“Spare me your oh-so-adventurous life story, Mr. Jones,”

Liz replied to him. “Don’t think you can impress me with it. Maybe my brother, but not me.”

Indiana looked at her angrily. For the first time he noticed the clarity of her blue eyes. What was behind that insolent twinkle? Did she think of him as just an extra set of arms? This insecure twenty-or twenty-two-year-old was going to ignore all his experience and knowledge of human nature?

“Listen!” Indiana said. “If you think…”

“What do you want?” asked a voice from between them.

“Uh — I beg your pardon?”

“What do you want?” repeated the voice undeterred, from a man who had stepped suddenly beside him, and when Indy regarded him with annoyance, he proceeded to explain. “Your order, sir. Have you decided?”

“No, not yet. Ask these two first.”

“The lady and gentlemen have already ordered.”

“Very well, then… I’ll have the same.”

The waiter raised a highly indignant eyebrow.

“The same… as whom, sir? As the lady or the gentleman?”

Indiana wanted to say that on the other side of the table was neither a lady nor a gentleman, but he bit his tongue.

He looked at the two of them. To judge by their character, Liz would have ordered some fancy delicacy, appealing more to the eyes than to the mouth. To play it safe, he nodded in Raymond’s direction.

“I’ll have what he’s having.”

“As you wish, sir!” The waiter bowed and disappeared.

Indiana looked at them.

“How about if we sign a truce and you tell me what happened to Basil? That’s why you brought me here, right?”

Raymond assured himself with a sidelong glance to Liz that she wouldn’t mind if he took over.

“Everything began a few months ago when he sent us a telegram at Oxford,” Raymond said, turning to him. “There we have a house, and I’m studying archaeology at Trinity College. For some time, I’ve wanted to follow in the footsteps of my father, you know.” Indiana stopped himself from commenting that they were damn big shoes to fill, that he had chosen for his little feet. “In the telegram, he instructed us to convert the family property into cash, as much as possible. He would need it to finance an expedition that he wanted to undertake with us. We were to come to Istanbul with the money, and he would wait here for us. Of course, it took some time for us to raise the money.” He coughed. “To be honest, the events of the past few years hadn’t left us with much. Not that we had to live in the poorhouse, but bank loans were out of the question, and I couldn’t very well sell our home based on a single telegram. As you may have heard, our father has had a string of bad luck recently.”

“It hasn’t been bad luck, so much as bad business partners,” roared Liz. “Those greedy villains kept all the artifacts for themselves, and additionally demanded huge sums, claiming the revenues weren’t sufficient to cover the costs. The court ordered my father to pay. He had signed the contract without reading it.”

Indiana nodded. He knew all about the slick salesmen who were ruining the world of archaeology. They didn’t give a damn about the mysteries of the past, but were only interested in making a quick buck. Wherever valuable artifacts or ancient treasures could be found, they were always nearby, like vultures on a rotting carcass. And once you’d engaged in business with them, it was difficult to free yourself from their greedy claws. Indiana knew a thing or two about it.

“By the time I finally arrived in Istanbul,” Raymond continued, “my father had already left. From talking to the porter at the hotel here, I gather that he found partners for his expedition, and couldn’t wait any longer. He wanted us to wait for him, and he said he would contact us as soon as he could, if he succeeds. So I’ve just been waiting here, at least until Liz arrived.”

“So you didn’t travel here together?” asked Indiana.

“That wasn’t possible,” said Liz. “At the time, I wasn’t home, but studying abroad in India. Raymond contacted me there, and summoned me here.”

“You’re studying archaeology too?”

“Do I look like someone who’d have fun digging in the dirt? Maybe that appeals to people like you and Raymond, but not me. I’m studying English art history, and in particular, India’s early colonial period. At least that’s something practical.”

Indiana bit his tongue.

“And what happened then?” he asked.

“As soon as I arrived in Istanbul,” said Liz, “we were ordered to the British Embassy.” She lowered her eyes.

“An attaché there told us that our father had been killed.

An accident, during the military campaign in Egypt. And since such actions are subject to the strictest secrecy, it wasn’t possible for him to give us any details.” Her defiant tone betrayed just how much she believed this version of events. “Then the snob had the nerve to tell us that as British citizens, we certainly understood these matters,

before expressing his condolences. The gesture seemed quite hollow, however."

Egypt! Al-Kassah had mentioned that Basil Smith might have gone there. If it really were true, a military accident didn't sound too far-fetched. Earlier this year, German Field Marshal Rommel, the so-called Desert Fox, had brought much of the North African coast under his control.

Supposedly, however, the Allies had in the meantime succeeded in recapturing the Egyptian coastal areas and large parts of Libya. If the professor had chosen these areas for his expedition, he may very well have been caught in the crossfire. On the other hand — who would get involved with such an expedition, knowing from the outset that it would be so dangerous?

"Naturally, we immediately launched an investigation into the whereabouts of our father," Raymond said. "To no avail! We even considered traveling to Egypt on our own to continue the search. But without more specific clues, that seemed hopeless. So, we finally resolved to enlist your help. The rest you know." He cleared his throat as he awaited Indiana's next outburst, certain that the subject warranted one.

But Indiana had no intention of getting upset about it again. There were things which one had to overlook. At least temporarily.

"Your father never mentioned what he was after? Or where exactly the expedition should go?"

"Unfortunately not." Raymond made a helpless gesture. "The message was simply that he had the greatest archaeological find in history in his sights, and that we should join him so we could experience the triumph together. We hadn't even heard anything about Egypt until we arrived here."

Indiana sighed. The greatest archaeological find in history. It sounded huge. But it took them no further. It could be anything.

"Unfortunately, you're right; 'Egypt' is too vague to give us any concrete place to start."

"Wait," said Raymond. "There are two little things that struck me. I don't know if they are important…"

"Say it! Anything can be important. Even the smallest little thing."

"Very well. First: The message from our father came not from Istanbul, but from Crete."

In Indiana's skull, the gears started turning. Crete was rich in archaeological ruins. It was the center of the Mi-noan culture, one of the first great empires, which had spread throughout the Mediterranean.

"Secondly, I found a note in his suite." Raymond reached into a pocket and took out a small, crumpled piece of paper. "There are numbers listed. I was wondering whether he perhaps deliberately left it behind. I've racked my brain, but I haven't the slightest idea what they might mean."

Indiana took the note. *H 2, 148*, apparently in Basil's handwriting. He was just as dumbfounded as Raymond.

Perhaps it was a chemical formula, perhaps the number of a locker. The possibilities were endless. He gave the note back and shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm sorry, I can't make heads or tails of it." Indiana considered briefly. "Let's try it another way. Do you know what your father was working on in the preceding months?

Maybe there are some clues to what he was planning."

The two shook their heads in harmony.

"Well, I could be wrong," Liz said suddenly. "But I think he had a special interest in the writings of Herodotus.

At least, he mentioned something along those lines when he visited us last year at Oxford."

"Herodotus?" Indiana repeated, frowning. That was in line with what he had heard from Al-Kassah. The dealer had mentioned that Basil Smith was researching original manuscripts in a private library in Bursa. Original manuscripts by whom? Herodotus? Indiana had the feeling that they had just put together the first pieces of the puzzle. And most likely there would be more waiting in Bursa. Of course, they still had to find out which library Smith had visited. But there couldn't be many there.

"Yes, Herodotus," Raymond chimed in eagerly, rattling off information like a teletype. "A Greek writer, born in Halicarnassus, who lived in the fifth century BC. He traveled the known world: Asia Minor, Italy, Egypt, Persia, Babylon and even the Scythian kingdom. He met personally with such historical figures as Croesus, Cyros, Dar-ius and Xerxes. He wrote nine books detailing his travels, and because they have proven to be extremely accurate and thorough, he

is generally considered to be the father of history." He took a deep breath — something that he had not done in several seconds.

"Bravo, Raymond," said Liz sarcastically. "You learned that well! I'm sure your college professors would be very impressed with that." She looked suspiciously at Indiana.

"Now, that doesn't exactly reflect well on your skills, if you don't even know Herodotus! Even I've heard of him."

"Of course I know Herodotus!" Indiana replied testily.

"I was just trying to think why your father might be so interested in him."

"And?" asked Liz. "What have you determined?"

"I have a few guesses, but not much, unfortunately,"

he admitted frankly.

"So what do you think, now that you've heard the whole story?" asked Raymond. "Will you help us find our father?"

Indiana cradled his head thoughtfully.

"I don't really know," he said hesitantly, though he had long since decided. His remaining concerns were solely for Basil's kids. What he had in mind would likely be no picnic. This was a troubled area in perilous times. The two could certainly end up being a ball and chain on his leg. Should he take them along at all? Raymond was a pale sight, bookish, clumsy and nosy. The petite Liz didn't look like she was used to hardship more demanding than an evening stroll. She was weak and fragile. How would they handle the rough terrain, the blistering sun, or the inevitable bandits — or what if they got caught in the crossfire, as the professor probably had?

"Look at you!" Liz snapped. "I know exactly what you're thinking. You think I'm weak and fragile."

"I... Of course not!" he lied. "No way!"

"Don't try to fool me! I've accompanied my father on many of his trips. Make no mistake! I'm tougher than you think. And we have a right to know what's happened to our father. He's the one who called us here!"

Indiana gave up.

"And if your father really is dead?" he objected.

"That's not possible!" she cried excitedly. "How dare you say such a thing? I know that he is still alive!"

He placed a reassuring hand on her forearm, and surprisingly she did not defend herself against the contact.

“I hope so too, Liz. But what if — once we look into it
— we find that it’s true?”

After a few seconds of awkward silence, Raymond cleared his throat and responded.

“In that case it is our duty,” he said solemnly, with sparkling eyes, “to find what he was looking for. Whatever else is true, my father’s reputation was well-earned.

And if he says that it is the greatest find in history, then we can expect nothing less.”

Indiana agreed with him, inside. That was exactly what just went through his head. The greatest archaeological discovery in history! Such a thought could easily become an obsession for any full-blooded archaeologist, once he got it into his head. But why did it make Raymond’s eyes sparkle so strangely? Could it be that he was secretly less concerned with his father’s glory than with his own? As quickly as it had appeared, the strange suspicion vanished into the depths of Indy’s mind.

“Very well,” he finally agreed. “Let’s try it. I think that I owe my old friend Basil that much.”

Liz beamed at him, as if she wanted to drape her arms around him in an embrace. Wow, he thought, she can look really beautiful!

“But only on one condition,” he added. “No more hide-and-seek, no more fake telegrams, no more hired goons or other such nonsense!”

“No, definitely not!” Raymond hastened to assure him.

“As we already told you, that was all just…”

Indiana was about to object, to stop Raymond before he could get going properly, but was interrupted by the waiter serving their food: enticing, fragrant beef medallions with all kinds of side dishes for Liz — and two plates of a green, soggy substance for Raymond and him. Indiana looked skeptically at his plate. Somehow, he felt as if the disgusting mass could at any moment begin to move, jump off the table and wobble out of the restaurant.

“What the heck is *that?* ”

“Spinach,” replied Raymond, thrilled as he shoveled the first bite into his face. “A special blend. With carrot juice and vegetable extracts. The perfect food for all real men. Spinach is strength!”

Liz laughed out loud when she saw Indiana’s stunned expression. He felt like crying. Spinach! This guy had clearly seen too many

cartoons. He made the best of a bad situation and bravely forced a spoonful of it into his mouth, all the while staring longingly at Liz's plate. Maybe it would help if he imagined a juicy piece of meat on the spoon. It didn't help. The stringy goop tasted unlike anything he had eaten before, a far cry from palatable. Still, it filled his stomach, and when one hadn't eaten a bite for twenty-four hours, that was something.

"Do you have any ideas how we should start?" Liz asked, as she finished her meal. Indiana wondered if he shouldn't just place another order for what Liz had eaten.

But he didn't want to look weak in front of these two. Perhaps he'd just order something from room service afterward.

He told them that he had heard her father had been to a library in Bursa. "We need to find out which one, and what he was researching. First, we should try the British Embassy again. It's quite possible that someone there knows more than they're letting on."

"I'm sure you're right," said Liz. "But it's useless. The embassy staff have sworn a code of silence. I can already hear their response." And in an altered voice and blasé expression, she added, "I'm sorry! Unfortunately, I am not permitted to tell you anything more about it. As I said, everything is subject to secrecy! But I can offer you the most sincere condolences of the entire nation!"

Indiana smiled indulgently.

"Leave it to me. I have special methods. And besides, you have to remember that I've done many favors for the English government in the past."

"That's music to my ears," croaked Liz.

* * *

"And even if you have provided the Empire with so many valuable services, Dr. Jones," said the embassy attaché in a pompous voice, his head bobbing up from behind his huge wooden desk. "I'm sorry. Unfortunately, I am not permitted to tell you anything more about it. As I said, this matter is subject to the strictest secrecy!"

Indiana had to admit that Liz's impression from the previous night had been perfect. However, he never thought it possible that a man could be so narrow-minded, so obsessed with duty and

obligation. All characteristics of a man destined for the diplomatic service.

"But I can offer you the sincerest condolences of the nation, of course," continued the attaché.

"How considerate of you," growled Indiana. "Unfortunately, that doesn't do us much good at all."

"What's that?"

"Never mind. I was just thinking out loud." Indiana decided to try one last time. "You really can't tell us? Look at us! Do we look like German spies? Come on! Just one little clue. For example, where exactly was Basil Smith!"

"I don't see how that would be possible. The unit that the professor was assigned to is subject to the strictest secrecy." He grabbed a ruler and twirled it around pompously.

"But I think I already told you that."

"Basil Smith was participating in a military operation of the English army?" Indiana asked. He felt Raymond and Liz share his astonishment.

The attaché was taken aback, questioning what he had said, and apparently came to the conclusion that he had betrayed more than he had intended. Outrage appeared on his already resentful face.

"Think whatever you want!" He fumbled with the ruler, as if to scare away annoying flies. Probably that's what they were in his eyes — three unwanted flies on the magnificent cake of the British Empire. "Now, if you'll excuse me now… please? I have work to do."

Yes, thought Indiana, for example, playing around with the paperweight. But he realized that they would not get much further here.

"Don't think you can get rid of us so easily!" Liz exclaimed excitedly. She pushed past Indiana and angrily leaned over the desk. On the other side, the attaché involuntarily moved back a few inches. "Did you honestly believe you could just tell us that our father is dead, and the matter would thus be closed? If so, you are entirely mistaken! We have a right to know what happened to our father! And we won't leave this office until we know all about it."

"May I remind you that Britain is at war?" replied the attaché, unimpressed.

"And you think that justifies your methods?" Liz's fist thundered furiously on the desk. "Do you think of nothing other than your

orders? Let's see, maybe a few slaps will bring you back to reality!"

The attaché made a discomforted face at the mention of such physical attacks. He fumbled nervously around the collar of his dress uniform and seemed to consider whether the situation justified calling out to the guards in the corridor for help.

Liz probably would have actually jumped on him, if Indiana had not held her back.

"Come on," he said, pulling her arm toward the door.

"This is pointless. We're not getting anywhere here."

"Let me go!" she hissed at him and tried to pull away.

"I know how to deal with this moron. We'll see how talkative he becomes after a swift kick in the balls!"

"What?" said the attaché.

"You… uh… don't misunderstand," Indiana said soothingly, turning to him. The last thing they needed now was trouble with the embassy. "The young lady is just preparing a sharply-worded note of protest," Indiana translated her words into the diplomatic parlance. Sometimes it paid to be fluent in foreign languages.

Before the attaché could answer, Indy had shepherded Liz out of the room, and Raymond followed them, shutting the door behind him. Outside, she had calmed down, and Indy could release her without worrying that she'd run back into the office to carry out her threat!

"Sorry," Liz said softly. "Even I don't know what got into me. But these people make me forget my good up-bringing."

"I know what you mean," he said. "But in the future, it would be better if you kept your temper a little more in check."

"Well, you're in no position to give me advice!" Liz threw a defiant glance at Indiana. "Wasn't it just last night, you told us about your special methods for getting information out of people? So far I haven't seen anything special."

Indiana pressed his lips together. Why did this person have to criticize everything? And what irked him even more — why did she have to be right?

"At least we learned that your father was working with the British military."

"Fine," she said without much conviction. "And how does that help us any?"

"Unfortunately, I don't know that, just at the moment,"

he admitted. They left the embassy and went to the car that Raymond had hired that morning from the REGENCY.

“What do we do now?” asked Raymond. He seemed to think from the beginning that the embassy would be a dead end.

“Just a little trip to Bursa. Let’s hope that we’ll find the library your father visited — and maybe even what he sought there.”

“Not me!” Liz waved. “Paging through dusty old books, that’s not for me. And I can’t help you experts anyway.

You’ll do better without me. Meanwhile, I’ll stay here and run some errands.”

“All right,” said Indiana, “have it your way, and we’ll get you back to the hotel.”

“I think I can find the way back myself. Don’t worry, I can handle it alone.” And with that, she left them and plunged resolutely into the crowd of people on the streets.

“Wait, wait!” called Indiana.

She stopped and turned around.

“What for?” she cried indignantly.

Indiana jerked his thumb over his shoulder — in the opposite direction.

“The hotel’s that way.”

She looked at him as if she wished that he would be immediately struck by lightning. For a moment she hesitated, then took a deep breath, came back, and stomped past him without another word. He looked after her, shaking his head as she disappeared into the crowd.

“What’s the hold up?” exclaimed Raymond, who had already boarded. “Shouldn’t we get going?”

* * *

Their journey took them two hours, over bumpy roads badly in need of mending, running along the coast in a southerly direction, before they reached Bursa. The city was a few miles inland, where the green coastal plain passed the outermost border of the Anatolian highlands. Bursa had nowhere near the size and splendor of Istanbul, but consisted mostly of simple, one-or two-story adobe houses, in the midst of which rose more luxurious properties and the slender minarets of magnificent mosques.

It was easier than expected. No more than a few inquiries were required to find out that there was only one private library to consider. It was housed in a spacious, elegant villa of white stone, which had an almost palatial character and was situated on the city outskirts. Whoever lived here must have possessed substantial assets.

Indiana parked the car in front, after he had honked the horn at a small group of shaven-headed monks in orange robes, who moved from the middle of the road and now stood at the roadside. They rewarded him with unfriendly stares, but took their place without any vocal opposition.

Probably they had taken a vow which forbade them from insulting honking motorists.

The magnificent initial impression was confirmed after Indiana and Raymond had rung the bell and were led by a servant to a small marble hall, decorated with all sorts of plants and echoing with the gurgle of a small fountain in its center. The servant asked them to wait, and soon after they were greeted by the owner of the house, a gaunt and serious-looking man in his mid-fifties with graying temples and a high forehead.

"Dr. Jones?" He entered with a questioning expression on his face. "*The* Dr. Jones, from Washington?" His look and accent revealed that he was from France or Belgium, but his tanned skin betrayed that he had long resided in these parts. When Indiana nodded affirmatively, he seized his palm with both hands and shook it amicably. "It honors me to welcome such a learned visitor. How wonderful that anyone would be interested in ancient writings, especially in these crazy times. Incidentally, my name is Dumont. Pierre Dumont."

Indiana was pleasantly surprised by the friendly welcome. He pointed to Raymond and introduced him.

"Raymond Smith?" Dumont repeated questioningly, while the two shook hands. He looked him over carefully.

"Perhaps the son of the famous Basil Smith?"

"Yes, that's right," Raymond confirmed, flattered.

"I thought of him at once. The similarities are obvious."

Indiana raised his eyebrows and looked over at Raymond. He didn't see any similarities! It probably took a special eye. Dumont turned to him.

“So are the differences, naturally. And you know I still have the face of the father fresh in my memory. It was only a few weeks ago that he was here. But I am not saying anything you don’t already know.” He smiled. “How may I help you?”

“You may have guessed,” said Indiana. “It’s about Basil Smith.” He explained how the professor had been lost on an expedition, and how he was helping his children to look for him. Dumont listened intently. “Unfortunately, all we know is that he was last seen working in Egypt. That’s why we came here. We heard that the professor had been to see you, and suspect that he found some vital clue here that led him on his expedition.”

“Of course, you can count on my full support,” said Dumont. “If I can be of any help to you or the professor.”

“Do you know what he was looking for here?”

Dumont shook his head regretfully.

“Unfortunately not. For more than a week, the professor came here from Istanbul every day, and twice he stayed here overnight because it was too late for the return journey, but as far as what he was working on, we did not discuss it. He was very quiet, spending most of his time in the chambers, studying some parchment manuscript. As I knew him to be an extremely competent scientist, I had no hesitation leaving him alone. For the students who occasionally visit, it’s a different story. Then, I have to constantly keep an eye on their fingers, so they do not accidentally damage anything irreplaceable. Anyway, I let the professor work in peace and refrained from asking him any questions.” He shrugged his shoulders. “Well, I’m sorry that I cannot tell you more.”

“What are these parchments that he was studying?”

asked Indiana.

“They’re part of a collection of ancient manuscripts that was preserved in Islamic libraries since the Middle Ages, until I bought it years ago under very favorable circumstances. As far as I know, they were written centuries ago, in Latin or Greek, and served to educate pupils in early schools of philosophy. There are no originals, but very accurate copies of the original works of ancient authors such as Livy, Plato, Strabo, Diodorus and Herodotus.” He shrugged his shoulders. “Just how old they are, I do not know. Unfortunately, I have not had a chance to submit them for any analysis that could establish a firm date.”

“What did you just say?” Indiana ears perked up. “Herodotus?”

“Yes, among others. Why?

“Oh, nothing. Just a thought.”

Dumont made an inviting gesture.

“If it would help, I could show you where the professor worked,” he offered. “Maybe you’ll find something there you can use. To my knowledge, no one’s disturbed it since he left.”

Dumont led them into the back of the house, through beautifully decorated rooms that would be the envy of any museum. The sheer volume of artistic treasures that were housed here made Indiana’s beat faster. It was a veritable treasure trove, just waiting for proper archaeological study.

It seemed like a waste that these valuables were not made public.

“Your worries are misplaced,” said Dumont, reading his mind. “I grant access to anyone who wants it. I have been trying to set up a program with several European universities, but now the war has made such things difficult.”

He stopped in front of a heavy door and opened it. Behind it lay a stone staircase leading down into the depths.

“The scrolls are kept down there,” he said. “There they stay dry and cool throughout the year, protected from decay. Shall we proceed?”

He grabbed an oil lamp that hung on a hook beside the door, lit the wick, and descended the stairs. Below, they encountered an elongated vault. Dumont lit another lamp, resulting in a surprisingly sufficient amount of light. The walls were completely lined by shelves, on which rested countless rolls of yellowed parchment.

Through an open door, Dumont led them to the next room, which looked largely the same as the first.

“This was the room where Professor Smith worked,”

he said, pointing to a worn wooden desk and lighting the kerosene lamp that hung over it. “Mostly he sat here. But, as I mentioned, I can’t say what manuscripts he inspected in detail. But I assume that they were in this room.”

Indiana looked discouraged. Years of work awaited him if he had to dig through all the scrolls on these shelves.

“May we take a look around?” he asked.

“Of course. Take your time! If you don’t mind, I will leave you in peace. I have work to do. If you need anything, simply call the house

servant. He will bring it to you, or call me if need be."

"Thank you, that's very kind," Indiana said.

"Think nothing of it!" Dumont replied. "I would be happy if I could do anything to help the professor. He is such a pleasant and capable man, and it would be a shame if anything happened to him. I hope that you find what you are looking for." He winced and smiled apologetically, as a loud clatter sounded from the upper part of the building. "That would be the house servant. He is a charming fellow, but he can sometimes be a bit clumsy. Hopefully that wasn't something of value like the Assyrian amphora last week. If you'll please excuse me…?"

He left the two in the manuscript chamber and climbed the stone stairs to the ground floor.

"Yusuf!" he cried. "What are you up to now?" No answer.

He slipped through the curtain to the next room, where the crash had been revealed, and froze.

Yusuf had done nothing wrong.

Yusuf had been disemboweled, his lifeless body covered in blood!

From the corner of his eye, Pierre Dumont saw a movement, a faint orange shadow, and he started to spin around

— but as he did a sword blade separated his head from his shoulders.

* * *

"Look, Dr. Jones," Raymond shouted enthusiastically, "look what I found! Come see!"

Indiana, who was leaning over a couple of old parchments in the glow of the kerosene lamp, looked on impatiently. What was it this time? In the last few minutes, he had been constantly interrupted with unimportant items, as if they had been the most significant discovery since the invention of the light bulb. Sighing, he went to Basil's son.

"Here!" Raymond pointed to a large cardboard sign that had been placed on the shelf. *L 2, 98*, written by hand. "This is the system under which the manuscripts are sorted. I looked at the parchments on that shelf. It's a Latin text. The second book of Livy, Chapter 98. Do you understand? L 2, 98!"

Indiana understood only too well. He looked around briefly. Every shelf in this room had such labels! Had Raymond happened upon the solution to their problem?

"The paper!" he exclaimed. "The note with the mysterious numbers that you found in your father's suite! Do you have it here?"

Raymond dug the paper out of his jacket pocket.

"H 2, 148," he read and pondered briefly. "H for Herodotus, 2 for his second book, and if I'm not mistaken, 148 refers to the chapter."

Indiana nodded. He had come to the very same conclusion. Had he underestimated the pale bookworm?

"Come on, we must find the right labels!"

It only took a few minutes. The fear that the corresponding compartment may prove empty was fortunately unfounded. Indiana placed his hand on the old parchments. There were maybe five or six brittle leaves. He gently spread them on the wooden table under the lamp.

"Greek!" Raymond offered when his eyes set upon it.

He twisted his mouth. "Unfortunately, not my forte."

"But mine."

Indiana took out his reading glasses and sat on a stool in front of the desk. Frowning, he looked for the beginning of the chapter. The ink had almost faded completely from the yellowed parchment, but with some effort he deciphered the words.

"*They decided to leave a monument to their God. And so they built the labyrinth in the middle of the desert, on the edge of Moiris Lake, near the city, which is named after the crocodiles… "* read Indiana.

Near the city, which is named after the crocodiles…

he mused. He remembered the Greek name Crocodilopo-lis. Along the Nile, there were several old towns with that name. This text was obviously one of the travel books on Egypt written by Herodotus. Indiana searched his pockets for something to write without success, and turned to address Raymond.

"I better make a copy of it. Do you happen to have a pencil and paper?"

"Unfortunately, no. I'll go upstairs and ask the porter."

Raymond moved away, while Indiana turned back to the manuscript.

"*I have seen it myself, and it surpasses all description.*

If one were to take all the walls of Greece and all its buildings, together they may not have caused so much work and cost as this labyrinth. Consider the great pyramids, each one weighing as much as many Greek buildings; but the labyrinth surpasses even them! " He continued reading, when he was interrupted by Raymond's excited voice.

"Dr. Jones! Dr. Jones! Come quick!"

It took a second or two before he could pull himself away from the text. So it always was when he studied ancient writings. They fascinated him and drew him under their spell. The old words were like a portal to a time long passed.

When he entered the next room, a burning smell rose to his nose. He saw Raymond at the top of the stairs, waving excitedly!

"The door is locked! And… something seems to be burning behind it!" Indiana sprinted up the stairs. Raymond had not exaggerated. The door was locked, and dark clouds of smoke were oozing through the gap between it and the ground. What did it mean? Had it been a trap? He couldn't imagine Pierre Dumont capable of such a thing.

The master of this house was much too honest and friendly.

"I've called and knocked, but no one responded!" Raymond sputtered. "My God, what are we going to do? We'll be burned alive! Or suffocated! Or even worse!"

"Don't panic!" Indiana tried to calm him down. "Something must have gone wrong. We have no other choice than to break down the door." He looked skeptically at the massive, heavy wood slab to which he referred and judged it be sturdier than his shoulder blade. "We can do it," he said, trying to inject some courage into both Raymond and himself.

He stepped back as far as the upper landing allowed, planning to get at least a short running start — but he never got to implement his plan, because at that moment the door swung open on its own.

He needed only a tenth of a second to capture the scene.

The room was in flames in several different places, and in between ran two or three figures in long orange robes.

They held torches in their hands and were trying to set fire to the remaining decor. These were the same shaven monks whom he had previously encountered in front of the house.

It could not have been more than this tenth of a second before the monk who had opened the door raised his scimitar and rushed at him. Indiana dove just under the sword blow that had been aiming for his neck. As he ran forward, the monk's swing caught him off balance, toppling both of them over the edge of the landing. Entangled with each other, they tumbled down the cellar stairs together.

The back of Indiana's head hit the steps hard, followed by his shoulders, back, knees and once again the back of his head. The world seemed to swirl about him, until finally, after one last deadly crash backward, he found himself on the stone cellar floor.

Groaning, he raised his head, but was immediately wide awake, as he could see that the monk, who had landed just a few feet away — apparently without quite as much pain

— already stood on his feet and was reaching for his sword.

Indiana tried to ignore the stabbing sensation in his head and pain in his lower back, and quickly scrambled to his feet. Not a moment too soon.

The monk had taken hold of his weapon and attacked once more. This time he swung his sword horizontally, intending to slit open Indy's belly.

Startled, Indiana jumped back and avoided the whirring blade, instinctively protecting his stomach. As such, the blow struck only his jacket, and knocked one of the lamps from the wall. Clanking as it smashed on the floor, it immediately spilled, leaking petroleum into a fiery pool. The flames licked up to the first shelf, then climbed up on it and jumped right to the manuscripts. The bone-dry parchment burned like tinder.

Indiana, distracted by the sight of such invaluable assets going up in smoke, turned for just a moment from the monk.

He screamed fiercely as the blade cut into his shoulder, and staggered backward to avoid the inevitable, lightning-fast killing stroke. Something made him stumble. He lost his balance and hit the back of his head against one of the shelves. A colorful star exploded before his eyes, and he slowly slid back against the wall until he was sitting on the ground.

Dazed, he squinted into the air. Through the colorful twinkling he could just make out the form of the monk, who was standing directly in front of him. He had raised his sword with both hands over his

head and was preparing to deliver a devastating blow that was likely to split Indiana in two.

Indiana tried to roll to the side. His body would not obey him. The monk's arm muscles tightened.

Suddenly a shot whipped across the room. The monk persisted in his motion, and turned his head in amazement toward the basement stairs. As if through a veil, Indiana saw Raymond, halfway up the stairs, a gun in his outstretched hands.

Of course! It came to him in a flash. The gun was the same one Raymond showed him yesterday in his suite.

How fortunate that he had brought it with him.

Not that the shot had hit the monk; Raymond was an absolutely terrible shot — at just twenty paces, he had been so far off the mark, even he had to admit he was a *miser-able* marksman. The bullet had hit the back wall somewhere, but even so, it was enough to distract the monk.

Again and again, Raymond's index finger squeezed the trigger, and the recoil caused the gun to jump up and down in his hands. The second shot was a few feet closer, smashing one of the kerosene lamps on the wall. The third hit a couple of feet above a shelf behind Indy, and the fourth just missed Indiana's right knee, before ricocheting around the room.

"Stop!" Indiana yelled in panic, hoping to prevent Raymond from killing them all.

Fortunately, Raymond responded immediately to the call. He lowered the gun a bit and blinked in confusion, as if he could not comprehend why the monk was still standing there intact.

But beyond distracting the monk, his shots had been effective at one additional thing: they'd shaken Indiana from his deadly stupor. He pulled his legs back and kicked the monk in front of him in the abdomen with all his strength.

The man flew across the room, dropping his scimitar and crashing into a shelf that was on fire. Immediately the flames attached themselves to his orange robe.

He jumped up and tried in vain to free himself from the burning clothes. Screaming, he staggered around as a human torch, stumbling deep into the vault, where his wildly flailing set more shelves on fire before he eventually fell to the ground. The sickening smell of charred meat filled the air.

Indiana placed his hand on his injured shoulder and felt the warm blood under his fingers. Groaning, he grimaced as he moved his arm carefully, and the throbbing pain in his shoulder almost made him faint. The cut was deep and he was bleeding heavily, but apparently nothing critical had been severed.

He picked himself up and looked over at Raymond, who was still halfway up the basement stairs and marching down toward him. Another orange figure appeared at the door, a torch in one hand and a curved sword in the other. And a second fellow-monk was close behind.

“Be careful!” Indiana cried, warning Basil’s son.

Startled, Raymond turned around, raised his gun, and tried his luck again, this time failing to hit either target from less than five yards away. The next time he pulled the trigger, it just clicked.

The magazine was empty.

The monks, who had briefly slowed in response to the bullets, resumed their attack. Raymond took a step backward, beyond the edge of the stair he was standing on —

the architect had apparently forgotten a railing — and hung in the air for a moment, his hands flailing. Then he fell down and landed on a shelf, which collapsed under his weight. Dust swirled up, parchments and splinters went flying, and the gun clattered to the floor and slid under an adjacent shelf.

Indiana didn’t take the time to curse his luck, as Raymond had recklessly wasted all the ammunition, but instead used his uninjured arm to grab the scimitar that the first monk had dropped. Thus armed, he rose to meet his foes at the lower landing, so as not to give them the advantage of a position from which they could both attack him at once. They stood one behind the other on the stairs, so he only had to defend himself from the attack of the first bald-headed villain.

The man brandished both the sword and the torch against him, but handled both so clumsily that he seemed almost disabled. Indiana, who could only fight with one arm and was also not very experienced in dealing with scimitars, had no trouble dodging the blows and even forcing the monk to parry.

From the corner of his eye, Indiana saw that Raymond had freed himself from the wreckage of the shelf and was proceeding to dust off his suit, as was his unspeakably stupid habit. The seriousness of the

situation seemed to just barely penetrate his consciousness, as he caught a glimpse of Indiana's desperate position and his eyes widened in alarm. He quickly got down on his knees and began to fish around under the shelves for the gun.

"Hold on!" he cried out to Indiana. "I just found the gun and need to reload. I have replacement ammunition here! Here, you see!"

From his jacket pocket he pulled out a small box that quickly fell to the floor, thanks to his clumsiness. The cartridges clinked and rolled away in all directions. Raymond made an apologetic face and crawled after them on all fours.

Meanwhile, the monk facing Indy had realized that his method wasn't working. He threw the torch onto one of the shelves, where it ignited an additional fire, and took the sword in both hands. This allowed him to increase the power and speed of his blows, raising the pressure for Indiana. Still, he was able to parry the blows once or twice.

Slowly but surely, the monk pushed him toward the edge of the lower landing, until he had no choice but to retreat step by step to avoid getting intimately acquainted with the twirling saber bade.

He threw a desperate glance at Raymond. At some point, he had to finish loading! Basil's son, meanwhile, had gathered together a number of cartridges, and with a grim face was tinkering around with the gun. Apparently he did not know how to release the magazine.

Indiana couldn't spend any time pondering this, though, since the monk's attacks demanded his entire attention.

In addition, his buddy jumped behind him and also followed Indiana down the final steps.

Together, they drove Indiana back ever faster, toward a few shelves which were ablaze. Indiana already felt the heat biting into his back. It penetrated through his clothes and scorched his skin. Panting, he parried the attacks in rapid succession from the left and the right, and then, in a tiny second of inattention and exhaustion, one of the monks' blades caught Indiana's weapon and tossed it aside with a sharp, jerky movement. Bitterly, it landed somewhere in the background.

Indiana's frozen eyes caught sight of his empty hand, and he realized he had lost.

Over! Finished!

The monks ceased their attacks in the same second and exchanged a look, agreeing on who should be allowed to enjoy the privilege of ending Indiana Jones. The choice fell on the one who had beaten the weapon from his hand.

His mouth twisted into a contemptuous grin, the man turned to Indiana and went in for the kill. Indiana could do nothing but confront this death sentence that took the form of a flashing blade.

The monk was suddenly pushed a couple of feet forward by an unseen blow. With difficulty, he stayed on his feet, while the contemptuous grin on his face turned to boundless amazement. The sword slipped from his nerve-less fingers and clattered to the ground, where the monk followed a few moments later. It was only when he was lying at his feet that Indiana saw the hole in his back, spilling a bloody stain on his garment.

When Indiana raised his head, on the other side of the room he saw Raymond standing with the gun. Out of the barrel, a small wisp of smoke curled up and was soon lost in the thick, acrid smoke clouds, which were spreading rapidly. When he heard the shot and the crackling of the fire, the painful throbbing in Indiana's head disappeared completely.

The other monk could only stare at his motionless companion, then turned to Raymond and finally to Indiana —

and ran as fast as he could up the basement stairs.

Indiana hastened to get away from the wall of flames at his back, and stepped over the lifeless body. He couldn't understand why the monk hadn't used the opportunity to take him out before he fled. That changed abruptly when he saw what the bald man was up to once he had reached the top of the stairs. He tossed a triumphant grin down toward them, walked out of the cellar, and shut the heavy door behind him.

Indiana cursed himself. Of course, the monk didn't need to do it himself; he could wait in peace while the acrid smoke and pervasive fire finished the job for him.

Indiana sprinted after him in an act of desperation, but when he reached the top, the door was locked tight. Any attempt to knock it down with his body in this state was certain to cause injury. The pain would probably rob him of consciousness.

The smoke made him cough. Both men had been initially drawn to the door, but now they descended to escape the smoke that

gathered under the cellar's vaulted ceiling.

"I'm sorry. It's all my fault!" Raymond moaned. "I should have shot at him, as he ran up the stairs. Then we'd be outside now, not stuck in this death trap!"

Indiana had no answer. He doubted that Raymond's shot would have caught the running man. It was a miracle that he had been able to shoot straight once already, just as Indiana was looking death in the eye. Such a lucky shot could hardly be repeated, especially at a moving target.

This thought gave Indiana an idea.

"Raymond!" he cried. "Come on up! Move it!"

"But why? Down here the air will be breathable a little longer! Wouldn't it be wiser if we…"

"Do you want to wait until we choke? No, we gotta get outta here! Come on, come on!"

Raymond reluctantly gave in to the cajoling. Indiana grabbed his gun and took aim at the door's iron lock. And after he made sure Raymond was a safe distance away, he pulled the trigger. Again and again. With a series of loud pings, the bullets ricocheted off the metal.

What remained was splintered wood and broken iron.

Perhaps now they could break open the door with a swift kick. But the thought of a monk lurking behind it, saber at the ready, was not reassuring.

"Here," said Indiana, handing the gun back to Raymond. "It needs more ammo!" Raymond took the gun by the barrel and dropped it with a cry of pain.

"Ouch! That thing is hot!"

With the sole of his boot, Indiana was able to stop the gun before it fell from the stairs into the blazing shelves below. Breathing heavily, he bent down and picked it up.

"It helps if you hold it right, butterfingers," he said.

This time, Raymond grabbed the pistol grip and had it reloaded in no time.

"But there are only four shots left," he said, returning the gun.

"Then that'll have to be enough," growled Indiana. He kept the gun in his hand, ready to fire, then swung his right leg back and kicked against the remnants of the door lock with full force. The lock

broke with a crash and the door opened a little. A second kick swung it wide open.

Indiana found that his fears had been exaggerated. No monk was waiting for them. They were probably long gone, seeking their salvation as far away as possible. There was nothing more for them to do here. If their goal had been to destroy the house, they had done a very thorough job. Every nook and cranny was burning. Somewhere deep in the building, the first ceiling tiles fell to the ground.

It hurt Indiana's soul to see all these treasures burn.

But they couldn't do anything about it. There was nothing left to save here. Nothing — except…

"Now's your chance, Raymond, to get yourself out of the house! Get to safety!"

"Yes, but…? What about *you*?"

"There's still something I have to do." He turned his head and looked down the basement stairs. The passage to the room where Basil had worked was now blocked by a wide wall of flames. But maybe if he was fast enough…

"Don't worry, I'll be right back!"

"Then I'll wait for you!" Raymond replied firmly.

"Fine by me."

Indiana went down the cellar stairs. Once at the bottom, he used his arms to shield his face against the heat and jumped into the flames.

"Dr. Jones, don't!" he heard Raymond scream hysterically behind him. "What are you doing?"

It was too late. Indiana had already disappeared.

A few seconds later he came out again, gasping, panting for breath and knocking a few smoldering bits of his clothes with his hat. Coughing, he struggled up the stairs.

"Thank God!" Raymond welcomed him. "What did you just…?"

"No time," Indiana gasped. "We gotta get outta here!"

They rushed in the direction from which they had earlier been led by Dumont. There, debris that had fallen from the ceiling blocked the way to the next room. They had no other choice than to randomly select a different path through the blazing inferno. At the door to the adjoining room, where the curtain had long ago been reduced to nothing but smoldering rags, Indiana cast a quick look and saw on

the ground the horribly mutilated corpses of the master and his servant.

"What?" asked Raymond, who had also stopped and saw Indiana's horror-struck face. "What is it?"

"Nothing!" Indiana pulled away from the sight. It would be better if Raymond knew nothing about it. He spurred him on: "Go! Go!" he urged.

A short time later they reached a window. Spontaneously, Indiana smashed it with a chair, and they climbed into the open air.

"But we can't just disappear," Raymond protested. "We have to call the police! The fire department!"

Indiana pointed in the air with his index finger. Through the crackling of the flames, distant sirens could be heard.

They seemed to be getting closer.

"If I'm not mistaken, they're already on their way. And it sounds like they'll be here in force!" He cast a bitter look back toward the magnificent house. Flames leaped from all the windows in the upper floors, and dark clouds of smoke rose into the clear sky. "No, we can't do anything here."

"But we must make our statements!"

Indiana laughed humorlessly. Could this kid really be that naive?

"They'd probably lock us up for a few days before you even got a chance. We just jumped out of a burning building, so they'll think there's a good chance we started the fire." He didn't feel the need to mention the murdered master and his servant, though they certainly figured into his calculation.

He stared piercingly at Raymond. "Have you ever seen the inside of a Turkish prison?"

Raymond said nothing, but still looked skeptical.

"Besides, what could we tell them that they couldn't otherwise find out?" Indiana added. "We weren't the only ones who saw those monks!"

He moved toward their car, and Raymond noticed the growing crowd that gathered around the burning building.

They would have seen not only the monks, but also the two of them. That was why Indiana wanted to be gone before the police arrived and started looking around. Their blackened faces and charred clothes would betray their recent whereabouts.

“Let’s go! Or do you think we can help your father better from a prison cell?”

It was a convincing argument.

* * *

“Oh my goodness! How did *that* happen?”

Liz looked worriedly at the wound in Indiana’s shoulder. He had taken off his jacket and shirt and lay on the bed in his suite at the REGENCY. He could barely remember how he had gotten there. Probably a few members of the hotel staff had carried him. In the last few miles of the return trip from Bursa, Raymond had had to take the helm. The throbbing pain in his shoulder and the blood loss had been so great that Indiana could no longer stay on his feet.

He raised his head and tried to smile — and failed.

“You should see the other guy!” he whispered.

“As I already told you, Liz,” Raymond interjected, “we were attacked by a horde of rampaging monks. There must have been dozens of them!” And like a hero from a Western, he added: “If I hadn’t reacted so quickly, we’d both be six feet under right now.” His big eyes beamed at her, then caught a glimpse of Indiana. “Uh, that’s the truth, isn’t it, Mr. Jones?”

Indiana, who remembered the events a little differently, nodded weakly.

“Sure. That’s the way it happened.”

“You heard him, Liz!” Raymond shouted enthusiastically. “I saved his life. When things are darkest, you can count on me!”

Liz appeared unimpressed.

“We’re still not sure whether he will live. I just hope that the wound isn’t infected.” She sat down next to Indiana on the edge of the bed and grabbed a bowl of hot water, which the staff had brought when they saw what was wrong with him. “But only time will tell!”

She dipped a cloth into the water and began to dab the wound with it. The bleeding had almost stopped now —

probably because his body was running out of blood. Indiana groaned. It felt as if Liz was poking his shoulder with hot needles.

“Wouldn’t it better,” he gasped, “if you sent for a doctor?”

“I can manage!” she snapped. “I didn’t make even one mistake during my first aid course.”

Indiana endured the ordeal with stoic calm. What else could he do? If he tried to walk, he wouldn't even make it to the door. He was at Liz's mercy. The numbness caused by the loss of blood made it at least bearable. And she wouldn't kill him.

"So," she asked proudly when she was finished. "The wound is clean. Now I will bandage it." She grabbed a small bottle and poured its yellow liquid on a small corner of the towel. "But before that…"

Indiana shot straight up. His roar could was loud enough to wake the entire neighborhood.

"My God!" he spat out between clenched teeth when he was able to speak again. "What are you doing? Trying to kill me?"

She frowned at the label on the vial.

"It's just iodine. It disinfects the wound. Of course, it stings a little."

He fell back on the bed, breathing heavily. Stings a little

— was she serious?

"Are you sure you didn't skip a lesson or two in that course?"

"Don't be like that! You think you're so tough, but tough guys don't scream like that! Be glad that I'm helping you at all!"

Indiana didn't know whether he really should be glad.

Maybe he'd rather sneak out of the hotel and fight a few more monks… With a sigh of relief, he noted that Liz had put the bottle away before she turned to him again. He saw that she had finished bandaging his shoulder — quite professionally, he had to admit.

"You could at least say thank you," she said, after she had gotten up to admire her work.

"Thanks," he muttered. It didn't come easily to his lips. Since he already had to sit up for the bandaging, he took the opportunity to swing his legs over the edge of the bed. He almost fell over. The iodine treatment had sapped the last of his strength. He barely managed to keep his eyes open.

"What are you doing?" Liz exclaimed, startled.

"I want to see the manuscripts. They are in my jacket.

I… I was only able to save a few from the fire."

"That's right!" Raymond exclaimed. "That's what he did. Didn't I tell you about it?"

Liz paid no attention to her brother. She came back and with a gentle force she pushed Indiana's upper body back onto the bed, although he tried to resist.

"Let me be. I have to translate the manuscripts. They'll tell us what your father was looking for."

"For now, you'll do no such thing!" she replied vigorously. "We can discuss it once you've had a few hours sleep."

"You… don't understand," he breathed. His eyelids drooped, and he had to muster all his will to keep them half open. "They can help us find your father."

"So I've heard." She stood up and looked down at him.

"But now you must sleep."

"But I…" Wait a minute! Was sleep really more important than her father?

But he couldn't spend any more time thinking it through

— because a second later he was asleep.

* * *

"*And they decided to leave a monument to their God*," read Indiana, the following night. He had slept for almost twenty hours straight and felt more or less recovered — with the emphasis on *less*. He was still a little shaky on his legs, and his shoulder broadcast pain at every careless movement. However, the wound had begun to heal, as they had seen when Liz changed the shoulder bandages. Obviously, she was more capable nurse than he'd initially expected (at least as long as she kept her hydrochloric acid, iodine and similar chemicals away from open wounds). Now he was sitting with her and Raymond in a secluded corner of the hotel restaurant, reading them the translation he had made of the manuscripts. Since then, he had no doubt: Basil Smith was hot on the trail of a first-rate archaeological sensation! "*And so they built the labyrinth in the middle of the desert, on the edge of Moiris Lake, near the city, which is named after the crocodiles. I have seen it myself, and it surpasses all description. If one were to take all the walls of Greece and all its buildings, together they may not have caused so much work and cost as this labyrinth. Consider the great pyramids, each one weighing as much as many Greek buildings; but the labyrinth surpasses even them!* "

"Wow!" exclaimed Raymond, who had listened with his mouth agape. "A labyrinth, larger than all the monuments of Greece together! It must be huge!"

With a sweeping gesture he knocked over his glass of carrot juice. At once, the waiter arrived on the scene and hastened to correct the mishap on the carpet as discreetly as possible, and then, in full recognition of his role in the incident, he gave Raymond a new glass of juice.

“Greater than all the monuments of Greece — that sounds totally unbelievable,” Liz responded when they were alone again. As usual, she was skeptical. “Isn’t that a bit excessive? I mean, these writers of antiquity had a tendency to exaggerate everything.”

“But, Liz!” Raymond replied excitedly. “Herodotus is quite different. Research has confirmed that in his trav-elogues he dedicated himself scrupulously to the truth.”

He emphasized his words, gesticulating wildly. Indiana pushed the new glass of carrot juice out of his reach before it ended up on the carpet. “Why should it be different this time? He also emphasized that he had seen the labyrinth with his own eyes!”

“But was it true?” Liz turned to Indiana. “Is Herodotus really reliable?”

“His descriptions have been confirmed by the archaeological evidence, in any case,” he said. He pointed to the notes he had made. “The uncertainty lies in the manuscripts.

Unfortunately, I lack the means to verify their authenticity. We would have to do accurate comparisons with other, established copies of Herodotus.”

“That project would cost a lot of time,” Liz said gloomily.

“Time we don’t have,” added Raymond.

Indiana waited a moment before answering.

“But your father would have had time,” he said. “And if he mounted an expedition based on this manuscript, then he must have been convinced of its authenticity.”

“Of course,” exclaimed Raymond. “It’s true! We can rely on his judgment.”

Liz nodded thoughtfully.

“So you think that he was in search of this labyrinth?”

“How can you ask such a question?” exclaimed Raymond. “There can be no doubt. This labyrinth has to be the largest structure the world has ever seen. Whoever finds it will be a second Schliemann!”

“Then why was it not found long ago?”

Raymond made a startled face. It seemed he hadn't yet considered this question.

"There are many possibilities," said Indiana, interject-ing. "The text says that it is in the middle of the desert.

And the Sahara is huge. It's possible that there are areas that haven't been visited by humans for thousands of years. Or it could simply have been buried under a thick layer of desert sand." He cleared his throat. "But before we get too worked up about it, you probably should hear the rest of the manuscript. Maybe it wasn't just the labyrinth itself that your father was looking for."

"Not just the labyrinth?" exclaimed Raymond, confused. "What do you mean? What could be more interesting than the largest construction project ever? That alone is certainly... Ow, what is it?" Liz, who had dealt him a little elbow jab to the ribs, replied with a prodding glance in Indiana's direction, and Raymond finally understood. "All right, all right," he said sheepishly. "I'll be quiet. You can read, Dr. Jones."

Indiana turned back to his notes.

"*There are two types of chambers there, underground and above ground, a total of three thousand, more that fifteen hundred of each kind*," he read. "*The above ground rooms I've seen myself and can describe from personal experience, while the underground rooms were only reported to me. My Egyptian guide refused to show me at any price, because they house the grave of the last god to roam the earth.* "

Even earlier, when he had sat alone in his suite translating these passages, it had given him a slight chill. It was the same chill that he had felt when he gazed for the first time on the golden surface of the biblical Ark of the Covenant. Or when he had held the Holy Grail in his hands and poured his injured father a drink from it! In recent years, he had more than once come into contact with ancient artifacts, which often served forces far beyond human comprehension. And if the legends and lore were to be believed, they were all ultimately the legacies of ancient gods, in one way or another. But if so, they were mostly disastrous legacies, two-faced objects that promised both power and terror, like Pandora's Box. But mankind was not ready for such mysteries, and perhaps never would be.

Often, it was all Indy could do just to prevent such objects from falling into the wrong hands.

And this time? This time, it was not “merely” the legacy of the ancient gods, but this time it was one of their graves!

A look over the edge of his reading glasses showed him that the text had also drawn Basil’s children under its spell.

In particular, Raymond’s face shone with wonder, while Liz’s face reflected only cynicism.

“The last god to roam the earth?” she repeated mock-ingly, almost choking on the words. “That’s just supersti-tion! It’s a hoax! If there really are gods somewhere, then surely they exist in heavenly realms, not here on earth!

And the grave of a god, no!” She shook her head vehemently, as if to convince herself of the absurdity of this idea. “You want me to believe that our father is chasing after such nonsense?”

She waited in vain for a reply.

“Hey, why aren’t you saying anything?” Uncertainty began to spread on her face. “I’m right, aren’t I? Such a thing can’t be real. If anyone’s buried there at all, it’s just a regular man. Men throughout the ages have convinced others to worship them as gods. I think there might even be one in Germany right now.”

Raymond was still dumbfounded, so it was up to Indiana to respond.

“Who knows?” he said. “Many ancient cultures believed that gods walked the earth in early times. Maybe this grave could prove it — or disprove it — once and for all.”

Liz was not impressed by this answer.

“It’s nothing but a fairy tale! And I’m a bit too old for such stories.” Again she nudged her brother with her elbow. “Say something!”

Raymond was jerked from his thoughts.

“I, uh, I... I think Dr. Jones is quite right!”

“Great, I guess someone can’t think for himself!” Liz commented with a sour face, folding her arms across her chest. “My goodness, are archaeologists required to leave their common sense at the door before starting their stud-ies?”

“It’s not worth arguing about,” Indiana said, and wasn’t sure which of Liz’s statements he was referring to. He tried not to lose the plot. “But one thing is certain: If this labyrinth really exists, and if it

is as huge as Herodotus describes, and if it was built solely as a tomb, then I am damn interested in seeing who could afford the expense —

whether it's a god, a man, or whoever! And I'm sure your father must have felt the same way!" He noted that he had raised his index finger, as he did when scolding his class back home in Washington. He quickly lowered it again.

"That's quite a lot of ifs, don't you think?" Liz was determined to be the fly in the ointment.

He looked at her angrily. Not that he would have been presumptuous enough to expect more gratitude for his willingness to help them find their father. No, he had abandoned this notion quickly (actually, right at he moment he met her). But a little respect or cooperation wouldn't hurt.

The prospect of bearing Liz's snarky attitude for days or even weeks made the idea of slipping away to look for the professor on his own seem very attractive. He owed the man a favor, sure, but not his children. But what could he do? He had given them his word, and it could well be that the professor had left more hidden clues specifically for the two of them — such as the piece of paper with the cryptic library label.

"Knock it off!" he grumbled. "When we find the labyrinth, we'll see who or what is buried there! Now can I continue reading?" Astonishingly, no one spoke, so he continued:

"*Whether there is more to these underground chambers than the plans shown in the floor mosaic in the Palace of Knossos, I cannot say; but the above ground chambers, which I saw with my own eyes, could not have been built by human hands. At one corner of the labyrinth is a pyramid, forty fathoms high, with huge carved figures, and beyond is the passage leading to the underground chambers…* "

He looked up and took off his reading glasses. "So, that's it. The parchments said nothing more on the subject."

"Well, I think it's more than enough," Raymond said.

"The largest structure in history, the grave of a god and a seventy- to one-hundred-and-twenty-meter-high pyramid, depending on how you measure a fathom. No wonder our father said in his telegram that it was among the greatest archaeological finds of all time." He frowned, then his face brightened again, and he snapped his fingers. "And he sent the telegram from Crete. Don't you understand? Crete!

That's where the Palace of Knossos is, the one Herodotus mentioned!"

One could almost hear the "click" of the gears turning in Indiana's head. The next moment he wondered why he hadn't thought of it sooner.

Crete! Of course! Basil Smith had been to the Palace of Knossos.

"What do we care about Crete?" Liz said snidely. "We need to find the crocodile town on this Moiris Lake and search for our father. Where else are we to find any trace of him?"

"I'm afraid you're overlooking some small problems there,"

Indiana turned to her with sigh.

"What am I missing?"

"For starters, this Moiris Lake is exclusive to ancient Egyptian lore. Nobody knows where it was located. And since it was in the middle of the desert, it's quite possible that it has long since dried up, and the labyrinth itself could be covered by sand. That would explain why neither have been discovered yet."

"Couldn't he be referring to Lake Chad?" Raymond speculated.

Indiana shook his head.

"It seems unlikely. There's some evidence against it.

There's no reason the ancient Egyptians would have built such a monument so far away from home. And besides, Herodotus visited the labyrinth during his trip to Egypt.

Logically, it must be found there somewhere."

"And the crocodile city?" asked Liz. "Doesn't that help us?"

Again he shook his head.

"Unfortunately, no. There were dozens of former cities that bore that name. In ancient Egypt, the crocodile was a sacred animal and was worshiped everywhere. And as I said, none of those cities were known to lay beside a Moiris Lake."

Liz dropped her shoulders. Her enthusiasm was extinguished like the flame of a candle when the wax runs out.

"You mean," she said soberly, "that we are still making no progress? That we are still at the beginning?"

"No, not exactly," he conceded. "We have at least a few starting points."

"And at least we know what our father was after," added Raymond.

“Fair enough.” Liz looked questioningly at Indiana. In her eyes was desperation. “But where should we start looking?”

Indiana waited a moment before answering.

“In Crete,” he said.

“Crete? But… why there?”

“Well, we know that your father was there,” said Indiana. “And we also know what he wanted there. He was in the Palace of Knossos, inspecting the floor mosaic depict-ing the plans of the underground labyrinth chambers. And even if he was only there one afternoon, he must have met people there or even worked with some of them. Maybe we’ll find someone who can tell us something about your father.”

Liz nodded slowly. The argument seemed reasonable.

“And if not?”

Indiana shrugged.

“We aren’t gonna find out any more about your father’s destination here in Istanbul, so sooner or later we must head to Egypt anyway. And Crete is halfway there.”

“Exactly,” affirmed Raymond. “We must go there at once, to find the mosaic floor. How else will we get through the underground chambers, once we’ve found the labyrinth?”

Liz punished her brother with a stern look.

“It wouldn’t hurt if you’d occasionally remember that our first concern is our father!” she hissed. “As long as we find him, I could care less about your labyrinth.”

Raymond winced. With a hurt expression, he almost uttered a defiant “that’s not what I said!” but then he changed his mind.

“But, Liz!” he replied, clearly offended. “How can you say such a thing? Of course, I’m just as worried about our father as you are.”

“Well, sometimes it’s hard to believe.”

Indiana cleared his throat.

“Um, maybe we can table this discussion until we get to Crete,” he said, bringing the task at hand back into focus, before explaining the military considerations. Sometimes this pair was like a cat and mouse — and Liz definitely wasn’t the mouse. “The whole Aegean Sea is off limits. It won’t be easy to get passage.” With discomfort, he thought back to the circumstances under which he had come to Istanbul. He wanted to spare Liz and Raymond passage among pirates, if possible. The two simply weren’t tough enough.

“Maybe the porter can help us,” suggested Raymond, welcoming the change of subject. “Yesterday he was able to get us the car through his cousin, and he mentioned knowing a pilot.”

As neither Indiana nor Liz had any objections, he motioned for the waiter and told him to call the porter.

Not a minute later, he stood before their table.

“Quite right,” he responded to Raymond’s question, nodding eagerly. “One of my cousins has a small airline.

Now, he might only be my seventh cousin, but believe me, he’s as dear to me as any fifth cousin. He has his own twin-engined machine at a private airport near here. He specializes in transport flights of all kinds.”

“Then he’d be able to transport three people?” asked Indiana with a brief look toward Liz and Raymond. “Somewhere around five hundred miles?”

“Of course. Wherever you want to go.”

“Good. Then tell him that he has a flight tomorrow.

To Crete.”

“Crete?” repeated the porter, horrified and gasping for air. “You want to go to Crete? Impossible! No one would be suicidal enough to venture there.”

“Just because of the blockade?” Liz wrinkled her nose.

“If that’s enough to scare your clown of a cousin, he doesn’t sound like he’s right for us anyway. We’ll have to look for someone else. There are plenty of people out there who can’t afford to reject our business.”

“If it were only the blockade!” The porter looked furtively to both sides, then leaned forward and whispered to them in a tone that made it sound like he was betraying a state secret. “Haven’t you heard that a German invasion of Crete is imminent? It could come at any day now. There have even been several bomb attacks.”

Indiana frowned thoughtfully. In recent days he’d had little time to worry about the war, but what the doorman said sounded plausible. Such an attack would fit into the German strategy. In recent weeks, the troops of the Third Reich had occupied Yugoslavia and Greece, and they controlled the entire Aegean Sea — why not Crete, too? It would fit their delusions of world-wide domination.

“All the more reason to get there as soon as possible,”

he thought aloud.

“Impossible.” The clerk shook his head vehemently.

“Absolutely impossible. My cousin Yusuf is indeed a brave man, but he will not get involved with something like that.

No one would!”

“If you tell us where to find him, we could ask him ourselves,” suggested Indiana. “Maybe he has a different opinion.”

“Exactly,” exclaimed Raymond — ever the adventurer

— and made a face that he meant to look resolute and bold, but on him just looked ridiculous. He rubbed the thumb and forefinger of his right hand together. “Maybe we can convince him.” He cast a sidelong glance at Indiana, as if to say: I know how to deal with these people!

The porter shrugged his shoulders.

“As you wish,” he said. “But you are wasting your time.

Yusuf will say the same thing as me. You won’t find anyone who is crazy enough to venture even close to that island!”

3

Crete, Greece
May 20, 1941

"Another quarter hour, then we are there!" Yusuf almost had to scream to make himself understood over the booming noise in the small cockpit. He pointed outside. "There, you see! Already, there is Crete."

Indiana, who was sitting beside him, stretched out his head and stared over the pilot's outstretched arm into the deep black darkness that lay beyond the plane's windshield.

The stars had been hidden behind a cloud cover for hours, and it was difficult even to imagine seeing where the sea touched the sky. The moon, whose pale glow might have brought a little more light to the matter, had not yet risen.

Indiana shook his head. It was impossible to detect anything out there. Nevertheless, he had the vague impression that straight out in the darkness lay something perhaps a shade blacker than the rest of the world — if that were even possible.

"Yes," he grossly exaggerated, "I see it!"

Apparently he was betrayed by the dumbstruck look on his face, bathed in the pale light of the sparse instrument panel in front of him, because Yusuf began to laugh up-roariously.

“Trust me!” he cried, as if he could read Indiana’s thoughts. “It’s not my first night flight to Crete. I know it like the back of my hand.”

“Music to my ears!” Indiana responded and gave up staring into the darkness. After a few minutes his eyes had begun to ache. It was a complete mystery, how the pilot could be guided in such pitch-black night — it had to be similar to the experience of stumbling in a pitch-dark cellar until you bumped your head on something — but if the dark outline in front of them actually was Crete, he must have known what he was doing. It was also to his credit that he seemed to have stayed perfectly on course in spite of the turbulence that plagued them for the past few hours. Of course, this was pure misery for Raymond, who along with his sister stayed in the rear cargo bay, fighting his sickness with a green face. He had already lost two or three rounds, but fortunately Yusuf kept a good number of paper bags on board. Indiana was glad to be sitting here in the cockpit, temporarily escaping the two bullies.

When they had visited Yusuf that afternoon at a small private airport and told him what they intended, he had initially reacted negatively, just as horrified as his cousin from the REGENCY. But the ever larger sums of money Raymond offered must have convinced him, because at some point he could no longer say no. As the airspace over the eastern Mediterranean during the day was swarming with German fighter pilots, a flight by daylight was out of the question. So they had started at sundown. The first part of the route led over Turkish mainland in a southern direction, and when the last glow of the sun had disappeared over the horizon, Yusuf steered the machine west-ward toward the sea. Aside from the turbulence, it was a quiet flight. If they had flown over battleships or crossed paths with other aircraft, they had done so unnoticed, because they flew the route with their lights off.

As the clouds above them parted, showing a handful of sparkling stars in the firmament, Indiana saw by their faint light a larger land mass ahead of them. Yusuf, who had made a small fortune that afternoon after their agreement, had not exaggerated when it came to his piloting skills.

This was undoubtedly Crete! But the lights were out all over the island, and only brief flashes lasting a second or two could be seen here or there. Apparently a blackout had been imposed over the whole island.

What Indiana saw — or rather what he did not see —

made it clear that there was still another problem they'd have to overcome. Finding a three-hundred-mile-long island in the dark of night was one thing. It was quite another to find, under the same circumstances, an airport runway perhaps three hundred yards long, and to land on it safely!

Yusuf made a dismissive arm movement when he spoke to him then.

"Let me worry about that! I know a few people at the Maleme airport. They will guide us in safely. You will see!"

Indiana sighed. Hopefully!

Soon they reached the land mass. Yusuf throttled the engine and reached for the radio.

"Calling Maleme Airport!" he cried, and identified himself. "We are approaching and ask for permission to land.

Hello, Maleme Airport, do you hear me?

He listened in vain a few seconds for an answer, then he tried again. The response remained the same. There was none.

Only static came from the receiver.

"Hello, Maleme! What's the matter with you? Are you sleeping on the job? We'll be on top of you soon and ask for permission to land. Urgently! And turn on some lights so that I can bring this baby down safely."

The receiver roared to life, a voice suddenly bellowing forth, its commanding tone unmistakable despite the expected distortion.

"This is Maleme Airport. Permission to land is denied.

Turn back at once! I repeat! Permission to land is denied.

Turn back immediately! Confirm!"

"Negative," Yusuf shouted into the microphone. "You must give us permission to land. We do not have enough fuel for a return flight." He winked at Indiana, as if to say: This trick works every time.

Apparently not this time.

"No landing permit is possible! Do you hear? The airport is a military area. Turn back at once!"

Indiana could not help but notice the creases appearing on Yusuf 's face, half surprised, half angry. He seemed to have been unprepared for such a development.

“Listen!” he cried, pressing the nose of the machine further down. “We *must* land! A return trip is impossible!

We do not have enough fuel. Give us permission to land, or let me talk to Dimitrios. He will tell you that everything is okay.”

The receiver roared again. The answer was slow in coming.

Indiana, who had suddenly become nervous, tapped the pilot on the shoulder.

“I hope we’re not really running out of fuel?” he asked anxiously.

Yusuf waved him off.

“We have more than enough. But I have to convince them down there otherwise!”

Indiana took a deep breath and leaned back slightly.

Yusuf played his role convincingly. For a moment he had feared the worst…

“Dimitrios doesn’t work here anymore,” could be heard clearly through the speakers. “The order stands. You are not permitted to land.” For a moment there was silence, then the voice came on again, and if there had been any doubt as to their instructions, they did not leave any room for misinterpretation this time. “Turn back, or we’ll open fire!”

In the dim light of the instruments, Yusuf ’s face turned pale. But apparently not because he was scared by the threat; rather, it seemed that his honor had been offended.

Two or three seconds he sat there, breathing heavily, before he again took the microphone to his mouth.

“Hello, Maleme, do you hear me?” A deep breath. “You can go suck an egg. We’re coming down now!” He hesitated before adding: “One way or the other!”

He hung the microphone back up to concentrate, fully focused on piloting the aircraft.

“What are you doing?” Indiana called out in dismay, when Yusuf made no effort to veer from his present course and instead pushed the plane’s nose down further and extended the flaps. Hadn’t he heard what had come through the ether? Did he want to kill them all?

“What am I supposed to do?” Yusuf exclaimed angrily.

“I’m landing! And in Crete.” He looked Indiana over with disdain. “That’s what you wanted, isn’t it?”

“Yeah, sure, but…”

“Oh, are you worried because of that idiot on the other end of the radio!” Yusuf laughed. But it sounded neither happy nor natural. “Do not worry! They’ll not shoot at us. Nothing but empty threats.”

Indiana was more skeptical. What could he do but rely on Yusuf ’s judgment. The pilot was daring but not suicidal. He must know what he was doing. Otherwise, they were sitting ducks.

In a sweeping curve, the vehicle approached the dark ground.

“There, that’s the airport!” called Yusuf. “Ha, I could find it blindfolded.”

Indiana stared forward and was about to object that he could see absolutely nothing even remotely resembling an airport, when a bright sun exploded directly in front of the cockpit.

The pressure wave hit them like a giant fist striking the aircraft head-on and spinning it off course. It blinded Indiana and nearly threw him from his seat. The moaning and protests from the passengers in the bowels of the aircraft were lost in the deafening thunder that rolled over them, and a hideous scream signaled that fragments of the cabin were scraping along the outer wall.

“Damn it!” shouted Yusuf, trying desperately to stabi-lize the machine. “They shot at us!” He sounded stunned.

“They really were serious!”

A second explosion was heard in the distance, then a third and fourth. New pressure waves tossed the plane around, fortunately less disastrously than before.

Indiana tried unsuccessfully to see. His blinded retina produced only useless swirling colors and dancing stars.

Suddenly he realized that Yusuf couldn’t be doing one iota better. They were racing into the night like blind moles.

It was a miracle that Yusuf somehow managed to bring the machine under control. Indiana felt his seat press lightly into him, as they rose toward heaven in a gentle arc.

The isolated blasts had grown into an incessant barrage. More blasts shook the machine, but Yusuf kept it firmly on course.

“It’s anti-aircraft fire!” he shouted through the noise.

“Damn, they can’t do that!”

Indiana rubbed his eyes, and when his retinas finally recovered, he saw the entire sky bathed in fire. Explosions flashed everywhere, dozens every second, sometimes close, sometimes miles away.

And they were right in the middle of this hell.

“This can’t be meant for us!” he cried after looking out the side window. In the flickering glow of the fire flowers, blooming and dying again, the long bay and the port town of Maleme could be seen almost as clearly as if it were day.

Also, the airport could now be seen with no effort. The muzzle flashes of anti-aircraft guns were close to them, but also appeared in several places of the city and on the slopes of the surrounding area. The whole island seemed to be firing on all cylinders. “This is about something more!”

As if to confirm this statement, a series of explosions rocked the ground, eating their way through the landscape around the airport.

Bombs!

Indiana felt a touch on the shoulder, and when he turned his head, he saw that Liz had climbed into the cockpit.

She was bent over behind him, holding onto a rail in order not to lose her footing on such a bumpy flight. The angle allowed him an almost unobstructed view through her generously unbuttoned blouse of one of her small, firm breasts, not two feet in front of his nose. But under the current circumstances, a five-second look was the most he could afford.

“What is this?” she yelled in his ear, using her hands to shield her eyes from a nearby explosion. “Where are you taking us?”

Her tone finally tore him away from the sight.

“As you may noticed, I’m not the one behind the wheel!”

he shouted back.

“Yeah, well maybe you should swap places?”

“Liz! This isn’t a joke! Why don’t you go back to the cabin!”

“You think that it’ll be safer there, when we’re torn apart by a grenade?”

He didn’t want to get involved in this discussion. He rose from his seat and pushed her with gentle force back toward the cabin.

Her eyes widened in horror as she pointed past him to the cockpit.

“Oh, my God…!”

Indiana spun around, and saw through the cockpit window, a huge, dark aircraft, punching through the night and heading straight for them. His brain simultaneously registered two things about the image: first, the body of the plane displayed the arms of the German air force, and second, that there were no engines visible on its

sweeping wings. A majestic sight — unless you were on a collision course with this giant.

"Be careful!" he bellowed. The warning came too late, but Yusuf had long since recognized the danger. With all his strength he pulled the control stick toward him and steered the machine steeply up into the night sky.

Indiana lost his footing and stumbled toward the rear of the cockpit, along with Liz. Tangled up with one another, they tumbled along the ground until they finally stopped at the rear of the cargo hold near a stack of crates. Indiana's landing was surprisingly soft, as he noticed that his head had landed on her bosom. Not an uncomfortable pillow, he noted secretly.

"I, uh..." he stuttered, trying to apologize.

"The fact that you can think of such a thing at a time like this!" Liz snapped and tried to get rid of him. "And also, your beard is scratchy!"

Indiana struggled to his feet, grabbing the crates with one hand and trying to help Liz up with the other. She stu-diously ignored his efforts and attempted to get to her feet on her own. But before she had found a secure footing, the momentum that had gotten them through the steep flight up petered out. For a second, the machine hung motionless in the air, then Yusuf rolled them over into a nosedive.

Liz lost her balance and fell forward. Before she followed the many items that were rolling across the floor toward the cockpit, Indiana grabbed her by the collar. The sudden jerk cost her the buttons on her blouse, but fortunately the thin fabric stayed closed. Indiana moved toward her and helped her to grab hold of one of the bars alongside the cabin wall.

"Will you be sensible and stay back here?" he shouted to Liz.

She gave him a withering look and pulled the two halves of her blouse together, angrily.

"Oh, so you think you can just paw at my bosom a little," she exclaimed angrily, "and I'll do whatever you want?"

The light slap wasn't heard above the deafening roar.

Liz stared up speechlessly at Indiana, her mouth open, while a reddish tint slowly spread across her left cheek .

Indiana was equally astonished. Had he really just slapped her in the face? Why would he be tempted to do that?

Usually it wasn't his nature to hit women, let alone a half child. He hadn't intended it, but his hand had just moved on its own. He looked at Liz and didn't know what to say.

On the one hand, he was sorry, but on the other hand, the slap was long overdue.

Again the machine was shaken by a blast wave.

"We'll talk about it later!" he exclaimed indignantly, wanting to get an apology out of the way. "You stay back here! And take care of Raymond!"

When her response didn't come, he began to shimmy up the railing toward the cockpit. Yusuf had converted the dive into a controlled descent. Their speed decreased markedly.

Where the hell was Raymond, anyway? Indiana wondered. He didn't much like the plane, but not enough to jump off mid-flight! His eyes roamed over the chaos of overturned boxes and round rolling objects. He finally found Basil's son in a niche between the rear wall of the cockpit and a waist-high instrument box. One arm held on desperately to the safety straps, and the other cupped his mouth.

"I'm in bad shape!" was his soft moan in Indiana's ear.

"My God, I'm in bad shape."

He was so preoccupied with himself that Indy doubted whether he had even noticed the commotion around them.

If the earlier minor turbulence had upset him, Yusuf 's rapid flight maneuvers had to be absolute hell for him. The yellowish-green tint to his face was quite impressive.

"Don't worry!" was the only thing that Indiana could think to say. "It will all be over soon."

Raymond, who did not look comforted, reached for one of the sick bags. Indiana didn't want to be around for what was about to happen, so he turned once again to the cockpit.

"Everything okay back there?" Yusuf asked as Indiana settled back into his seat.

"Except for some minor differences of opinion — yes."

Yusuf laughed loudly, as if he knew what Indiana meant.

Outside, nothing much had changed. The sky over Crete was still lit by countless explosions, and the flickering light allowed Indiana brief glimpses at the dark outline of the gigantic aircraft above them.

And elsewhere, the unmistakable silhouette of parachute troopers could be seen.

Surprised, he noticed that Yusuf had maneuvered their aircraft just above the ground, further slowing their speed as they headed directly for a runway, which loomed out of the darkness before them. The airport of Maleme.

“You’re still trying to land?” he asked warily. “Do you want to kill us?”

“You paid me to bring you to Crete,” Yusuf replied in a proud voice. He met Indiana’s gaze with a quizzical look.

“Or have you changed your mind?”

The question took him completely by surprise. Landing honestly hadn’t occurred to him. From the moment he heard the first anti-aircraft fire, he just assumed their plans to get to Crete were canceled. He hadn’t counted on the professional honor and foolhardiness of the pilot.

“Well?” Yusuf urged. “Shall I land now or not? You must decide! There is not much time left.”

Indiana’s common sense screamed at him: Keep moving! Just get out of here! The facts spoke for themselves.

This was a German air attack, no doubt about it, and perhaps it was even the beginning of an invasion, the one Yusuf ’s cousin at the REGENCY had warned them about.

Out of everywhere in the world, Crete was probably the last place any smart person would want to be.

At the same time, another thought flashed through his head. What if the German troops actually managed to conquer Crete? Then surely it would be impossible for any American or British person to travel to the island for months or even years. This might be their last opportunity to learn more about Basil Smith’s goals!

“We land!” he decided spontaneously.

Yusuf nodded grimly and continued the descent. He wouldn’t have expected anything else.

With screeching tires, the craft touched down. It hopped two or three times before the wheels finally gripped the runway. Not a terribly smooth landing, but under the circumstances, it was a true masterpiece. Indiana’s face rendered a mute apology for having doubted Yusuf ’s skill at the beginning of the flight. He looked

anxiously to the anti-aircraft arsenals next to the airport building, spitting shells into the sky. Also, he could hear machine-gun fire.

But at least nobody seemed interested in their presence.

Of course, the situation could change at any second.

Slowly the plane rolled to a stop. Yusuf jumped out of his seat, barely waiting for the vehicle to come to a stand-still.

"Come on, hurry up!" he cried. "I want to get back in the air as quickly as possible!"

"You want to take off again?" Indiana repeated incredulously, following him into the cargo bay. They found Raymond still moaning in the corner, while Liz and Indiana exchanged a thoughtful, nondescript look. He noticed she had tied the ends of her blouse above her bellybutton.

"Certainly!" Yusuf replied, as he unlocked of the hatch and threw it open. "Or do you think I'd let my pretty baby get shot up down here?"

"It's pure madness to fly under these conditions, and you know it," protested Indiana, suspecting his words would fall on deaf ears.

"I landed just fine, and I will also take off fine."

Yusuf turned to Liz and urged her to hurry. After she got out, they ushered Raymond to the hatch, where his shaky knees succeeded in getting him out onto the airfield.

"Do not worry about me," Yusuf began his goodbye.

He laughed. "I'll make it. It's your own skin I would worry about!" He put a friendly hand on Indiana's shoulder. "And if you find Dimitrios, he is a good friend of mine and will be of assistance."

"Thanks!" Indiana said. For a brief second they looked at each other. In the last few hours a kind of friendship had developed between them. "And all the best!"

Then he too climbed from the plane.

"Stop!" Liz cried, as he approached her and Yusuf started to close the hatch. "What about our luggage?"

"We don't have time!" Indiana cried angrily. "Come on! We'll be lucky if we get out of here alive!"

Yusuf seemed to have heard their argument despite the noise. Before he locked the door, he threw two of the many travel bags that Liz and Raymond had brought on the journey down to the airfield below. Then he closed the hatch.

Shortly thereafter, the propellers roared to life and the craft turned around and began to roll back toward the runway.

"That's it!" Liz scolded. The wind from the propeller ruffled her blond hair. "This bandit just disappears into thin air with the rest of our luggage!"

"This bandit, as you call him, risked his life to get us here!" Indiana replied. "Forget the luggage! Do you see a bag boy here ready to carry all those suitcases?"

He ducked his head as a volley of bullets from a machine-gun whistled past them and struck the ground nearby. The concrete walkway they stood on was completely open. On the edge of the runway, the first German paratroopers had landed and were exchanging fire with the island's defenders. And ever more soldiers fell from the sky.

Indiana grabbed one of the suitcases that Yusuf had thrown down and pointed to a position protected by sandbags at the base of a small tower.

"Come on, over there!"

He grabbed Raymond's arm and dragged him along.

Liz, realizing the seriousness of the situation, grabbed the second bag and followed them.

When they finally reached the position and ducked behind the barricade for cover, they suddenly found themselves face-to-face with a dozen nervous MPs and as many soldiers. Some of them wore Greek uniforms, the rest, British.

"Don't shoot!" Indiana quickly shouted and raised his arms as far as Raymond and the bag would allow him.

"We're Americans!"

"Eng... Englishmen," Raymond muttered.

For a long moment they stood in silence, before someone ordered them to stand down. The soldiers lowered their weapons, and most of them turned back to secure the position. An officer came up to Indiana and his companions. Legs shoulder-width apart, he had a stern expression on his face, his arms folded behind his back as he inspected the civilians who had managed to land here under these circumstances. Half stunned, half angry, he shook his head.

"Either you are crazy, or suicidal, or..." He hesitated, and his gaze was penetrating. "...Spies!"

"We're scientists," Indiana said, "and I can explain this..."

He got no further. Next to him, Liz shouted in alarm, pointing excitedly at the runway through a gap in the barricade. Indiana saw at once what she meant. Yusuf 's plane was preparing to take off. But it wasn't moving fast enough to get off the ground. And close to the airfield, a bone-crushing barrage of carpet bombs ran at an acute angle toward the runway, right where the aircraft would be in a few moments!

Indiana held his breath, realizing just how close it would be. Damn, he thought, Yusuf had better come up with something...

At last the small plane broke free from the ground. It rose steeply into the sky, barely missing the wall of fire that would have devoured it at the end of the runway below. For a few seconds, the craft disappeared behind this wall of fire, light and smoke, then reappeared and flew right past the control tower. Once or twice Yusuf tipped its wings in greeting, then he roared over their heads and vanished into the night.

Indiana breathed a sigh of relief and turned again to the officer. He was grateful that Yusuf had escaped unscathed.

With some satisfaction he noted that Liz had also feared for the life of the pilot, in spite of the recent strong words she had for him. It showed that she wasn't as crabby as she pretended to be.

"As I said, we are..." he began, but the officer cut him off with a sharp comment.

"Save your words! God knows we have enough to deal with down here, without worrying about some careless civilians."

"Does that mean," Indiana said hesitantly, "we can go?"

"Don't make me laugh. As if there were anywhere for you to go! No, we have instructions to take you immediately to the commander." The officer twisted his face into a grim smile, an ominous sign. "And I can assure you that he hates nothing more than when his orders are disregarded."

"What orders?" Liz asked, innocently.

"As I'm sure you know, there is a strict ban on entering the country. For ignoring it, you really should be brought before the military court!"

"Well listen, if you even try..." Liz began indignantly, but a stern look from the officer silenced her.

"Be happy," he snorted, with his index finger aimed menacingly at her nose, "that our anti-aircraft gunners had orders to avoid your

plane. Otherwise you would never would have left the sky in one piece!”

He motioned to a nearby soldier, indicating that he should lead them to the commander. This seemed to settle the matter. He turned away without another word and joined his men, who had organized in the background and were now sweeping the airfield with their machine guns.

Meanwhile, hundreds of German parachutists rained down from the heavens, mostly out of range; but some sailed right in front of the defenders and were often already dead before they touched the ground.

The young British soldier who was assigned to look after the trio did not think much of his job. His machine gun was not aimed directly at them, but as a precaution he kept his finger near the trigger. With a brief nod, he urged them to follow.

Indiana saw that they had no choice. Fortunately, Raymond was able to move without any help. Now that there was solid ground under their feet, he recovered rapidly.

The greenish color of his cheeks gradually gave way a sickly, pale gray, which for him counted as a healthy complexion.

Liz joined them in silence, wrapping both arms around her bag, but the sullen glare she shot at Indiana conveyed her meaning perfectly: This is a fine mess you’ve gotten us into! He did not answer, although there were at least a dozen rebuttals on the tip of his tongue.

The soldier led them to the other side of the barricade, revealing a path, lined with sandbags, that proceeded to the outer wall of the control tower. A few men carrying cartons of ammunition rushed past them. At the end of the secure path, the soldier paused for a moment and looked in all directions. When they reached him, he pointed toward a couple of hangars not far away.

“Over there is the command post,” he said. “Come on, come on! And stay as close together as possible!”

Their trek led them to a number of parked trucks and a stack of crates, whose shadows danced to and fro wildly as the firefight in the sky continued. Behind their position, hardly a soul was visible. The fighting was taking place primarily on the opposite side of the airfield. The runway itself and the adjoining buildings remained largely unaffected by the heavy fire. The reason was obvious. The

Germans wanted to conquer the island, not destroy the airport, which was full of arms and supplies. After all, they had no heavy arms on the island. The airborne troops had to rely solely on the weapons they could carry.

At least, so far, Indiana thought uneasily. He was sorry not to have his own weapon. Though he doubted his Colt would help much if one of those German bomber pilots decided to carpet bomb them to kingdom come.

Raymond pushed himself up to Indiana's ear.

"What should we do?" he whispered furtively.

Indiana raised his eyebrows.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, uh, I mean... we can't really be expected to face a military court!" He looked expectantly, almost implor-ingly. The flight and the close call at the airport had drained nearly all his earlier sense of adventure. "Surely, you have a plan?"

"Of course I do!"

"So, what is it?" he asked hopefully.

Indiana pointed to their escort.

"We follow him and explain our situation to the commander."

"Great!" Liz chimed in from behind them. "It's really reassuring to have you here! What would we do without your keen insight and ingenious strategy?"

Indiana was very close to losing his temper. He never thought anyone in the world could make him so upset, other than Grisswald. But now he had come across these two. If he could have spoken to destiny, he'd have some stern words for it!

"If you have a better suggestion, just say so!" He glared at them and had trouble lowering his voice. "If not, then you'd better hold your sassy tongue, or else..."

"Or else what? Or else you'll hit me again? That seems to be your habit when you run out of arguments." She stretched out her chin defiantly. "Well okay then! Go ahead! Do what you must."

"What a great idea," he agreed with her, breathing heavily. "Maybe I should do what your father obviously failed to do too many times — you could use a good spanking!"

"Pssst!" the soldier hissed at them angrily. "Not so loud. Come on!"

He turned to face forward and jumped back in horror.

A lone German soldier, apparently a parachutist who had just landed, suddenly emerged from between the stacked crates just ahead of them.

Their companion pulled out his gun, but before he could pull the trigger, he got caught by the German's fire, which tore a half-dozen ugly holes in his uniform. He was dead before he hit the ground.

"Take cover!" Indiana cried, while the German waved his gun toward them. He rushed to Liz in order to pull her out of the way. It was too late!

The volley had already hit her and flung her petite body backward into the dust. Her bag flew in a high arc and landed behind her. She lay there, her limbs twisted.

The sight was an icy stab in Indiana's heart, and if he didn't become a victim of the next burst of fire, it was only because a kind of instinct — something that had developed in him over the course of many such perilous situations

— reacted independently and threw him to the left. He grabbed Raymond, who stood there stunned, and tossed him behind a long wooden crate, three feet high, where they pressed close to the ground for cover.

For seconds, shots and ricochets whipped around them, blasting sand and splinters, and then the fire broke off. Obviously, the German had run out of ammunition. A metal-lic click announced that he had secured a new magazine.

"Liz," Raymond muttered, bewildered, "what about Liz?"

Carefully, he lifted his head to look after his sister, but Indiana pushed him relentlessly back into the dust. The answer did not come to his lips. Raymond would find out soon enough what had happened to Liz. She had been caught in the merciless hail of bullets. No one could have survived that. A deep void welled up inside Indiana. Moments before, he had threatened to spank her — and now she was dead!

And if they didn't do something quickly, they soon would be too. Already he could hear the heavy footsteps of the German approaching.

"The gun!" he whispered to Raymond. "Hurry! Give me your gun!"

Raymond began awkwardly rummaging through his pockets, hoping to find what Indiana sought. But he quickly gave up.

“I… I didn’t think to bring it with me,” he whispered.

“It must be in the luggage.”

He might as well have proclaimed that they were sitting on a land mine — the effect could not have been more staggering.

Indiana suddenly noticed that the handle of a suitcase, the one he had grabbed, was still in his hand. In all the excitement, he’d forgotten he was holding it. But what were the odds — *one* bag out of ten or twelve pieces of luggage? The probability that he’d find the gun in this bag was small. But he didn’t have anything else to try.

He pulled the bag close to him in order to search it.

The box behind which they were hiding creaked under a sudden additional weight, and Indiana looked up to see the German soldier standing atop it, his weapon at the ready and a mixture of contempt and fierce determination on his face.

Desperate thoughts swirled through Indiana’s head. He *had* to do something. Anything. But — what?

The soldier barked a German word he did not understand, but whose meaning was unmistakable. It was a curse meant to accompany you to the afterlife.

Already, his fingers curled around the trigger.

A burst of fire cut through the night, and at that moment Indiana thought his life was over. But before his eyes, the German soldier was suddenly pushed forward by an elemental force, and landed on the ground a few yards away, covered in blood. His weapon followed him with a dull thud.

Indiana slowly realized that he had once again beaten death. When he raised his head, he saw in the distance a soldier in a Greek uniform rushing toward them. Dark, frizzy hair oozed from under his helmet, and beneath his mighty mustache gleamed two snow-white teeth, revealed as he reached them.

“Seems like I got here at the last minute,” he exclaimed, as he convinced himself that the German was in fact dead.

“The very last minute.”

Indiana got up and knocked the dust from his clothes.

Raymond did the same.

“You must be the civilians who ventured into this hell,”

the soldier said, almost apologetically.

“That’s right. I guess the word’s gotten around. But that daring landing had nothing to do with us.”

The soldier nodded, laughing.

"I know. There is only one man who could pull off such a feat, and only man that would have the nerve to tell the commander to suck an egg… and that man is Yusuf!" He extended his hand to Indiana, but retained a watchful eye on their surroundings. "Welcome to Crete! I'm Dimitrios.

If I know Yusuf, he will have already told you about me."

"*You're* Dimitrios?" Puzzled, he grabbed the hand he was offered.

"In the flesh. I'm sorry that I could do nothing for you regarding permission to land, but in this situation…" He pointed to the brightly lit sky as illustration, "… military matters have top priority. Well, at least I've found you now."

Indiana nodded. He had. And not a second too soon.

"Oh, and thank you," he offered, a little late.

Dimitrios responded with a wave of his hand.

"Don't mention it. But, tell me…" he sad, looking at Indiana, "what on earth made you to come to this island, with the German invasion imminent? Anyone with any sense — and who is not a soldier — is trying to get off this damn island. But you? You appear at exactly the wrong time. You have to admit that it looks awfully strange, even suspicious."

"I would say the same thing in your shoes," Indy responded. He paused and sighed. "And sometimes even I'm not sure we haven't gone crazy. However, we have to get to the Palace of Knossos. And after the invasion, it might be years before we'd have another opportunity."

"Don't be so sure," Dimitrios replied uneasily. "Here in Crete we have more than four thousand soldiers available to repel the invasion — Greeks, British, Australians, New Zealanders, and who knows who else! They will have a devil of a time if…"

"Dr. Jones, Dr. Jones!" Raymond interrupted, his voice cracking. He had rushed to his sister and sunk to his knees beside her. "Come here! Come quickly!"

Indiana felt a lump in his throat. Raymond's exclamation dragged him back into a reality that he had successfully avoided over the last minute. Perhaps because he just couldn't face it. But now there was no denying it. Liz was dead!

"Dr. Jones! Hurry up!"

He gulped and stepped hesitantly toward Raymond. What could he say to comfort him, when his sister was dead? He himself was sorely in need of solace. He gently placed his hand on Raymond's shoulder.

"We have to face it," he said in a halting voice. "We have to accept it. There's nothing more we can do for her."

Raymond looked at him, confused. His thick glasses made his eyes look even larger than they were.

"We can't just leave her here," he protested. "And anyway — why would we? You... you're talking as if she were dead!"

"Raymond, don't do this! Liz is dead. As much as it pains me to say it, we can't change anything. When fate decides..."

"Yes, but — she's completely unharmed!"

Indiana blinked. What was Raymond talking about?

He looked closer and, to his amazement, saw that Raymond was right. Liz was motionless, her limbs twisted behind her, but on her chest, barely covered by her knot-ted blouse, there was no bullet hole, no wound or even a scratch. He knelt beside her to investigate, and saw that, just as Raymond had said, she was completely unharmed

— except for the fact that she was lying there unconscious!

Indiana scratched his head. How was it possible? He had clearly seen Liz get hit by the soldier's shots. The force of the impact had thrown her backward several yards. And then, as the events repeated in his mind's eye, he realized the truth.

The bag! She had kept the bag in front of her body.

He gave Liz a few gentle slaps on the cheek. Her wry, angry face began to grumble and her eyelids opened.

"What... Where am I?" Her eyes slowly focused. When she tried to sit up, she groaned and pressed her hands on her body. "Oh my God, everything hurts! What happened to me?" She looked at Indiana suspiciously. "Did you actually go through with it and beat me?"

Indiana laughed and helped her up gently.

"The German soldier tried to snuff you out," he said.

"Don't you remember?"

She blinked in confusion and nodded reluctantly. It seemed to be slowly coming back to her.

"Do you know how lucky you are to be alive? The bullets would have torn you to pieces if you hadn't been holding that bag in front of

your belly.” Indiana looked at the bag a few yards away and saw the fabric had been torn apart by a number of bullets. A few scraps of paper blew across the ground. “What did you have in there?”

“Books,” she said blankly, her pale blond hair in her face. “Why?”

“I don’t mean to rush you,” Dimitrios interrupted, “but we must get out of here before the real dance begins. I’ll show you the way out of the airport.”

“Who is this?” Liz asked, confused.

“Our life-saver,” said Indiana, and as Dimitrios approached, he asked, “What about the orders to bring us to the commander?”

“Orders!” The Greek waved angrily. “Some orders are meant to be ignored. Or are you eager to be brought before a military court?”

“Not at all. But isn’t it a big risk for you? You don’t even know us.”

“Yusuf ’s friends are also my friends,” he replied lacon-ically. “And you must be his friends, if he landed for you in spite of the fireworks!”

Indiana wondered if the small fortune they had paid Yusuf had been the decisive factor. It was common in the Middle East for money to encourage a new friendship, unlike in the West, where money so often ended relationships. Different people, different customs.

“And besides,” added Dimitrios, “who cares if a few civilians disappear in the chaos? They could have just as easily be killed by the Germans.” How true! Indiana was starting to like the way this Greek thought. “Come on, come on!”

Crouching to take advantage of any cover they could find, the group left the airfield. Indiana put his arm around Liz, who had no objection to his assistance. They encountered soldiers several times, but they were too busy to pay them any attention.

After a while, some distance from the Maleme Airport buildings, Dimitrios finally stopped and pointed to a car that was parked under a wooden canopy. A small, unoccupied Jeep. It had a few dents and rust spots, and its brown paint was peeling, but otherwise it seemed to be in good shape.

“There... This Jeep was owned by a friend who was killed a few days ago in a bomb attack. I think he will not mind if you borrow it. The car keys are in the glove compartment, and there’s also a loaded gun in there.”

So there was. Indiana took the weapon for himself, grateful for the added security, small though it was. After he had put the two travel bags behind the seats, he started the engine, which purred contentedly. He turned to Dimitrios to thank him, but the Greek again waved him off.

"Take care of yourself! It's still a long way to Knossos."

"What's the best way to get there?"

"Knossos is about one hundred miles east of here. Normally, you would just stay on the coast, but at present that is very risky. The news on the radio is that German troops are in Rethymnon and Heraklion, and the road passes through both. Under such circumstances, you might drive right into the German positions."

"What do you suggest?"

Dimitrios pointed inland.

"Try to get through the mountains, along the southern coast. There, everything is quiet. And there's nothing that would interest the Germans there. A few mountain villages, that's all. You won't find any paved roads, but with the Jeep and a little luck you should make it."

"And once we get to Knossos? Are there archaeologists still working there?"

"No. I understand the dig site was abandoned when the situation worsened here." Dimitrios thought for a moment. "But I've heard that one of the professors is still in Warwari. It's a small village not far from Knossos." Dimitrios flinched as two bombs exploded some distance away, shaking the ground. He looked back toward the airport. "I must get back. I wish you all the best!"

"You too," Indiana said, once again neglecting to thank the Greek. "One last question."

"Yes?"

"How is it that you and Yusuf are such good friends?

I thought Turks and Greeks don't get along, or am I mistaken?"

Dimitrios flashed his white teeth.

"An accident of birth," he said, laughing. "Yusuf and I are related! Fourth cousins!"

* * *

The old woman opened the door of the hut, looking out quizzically. A farmer's wife in local dress, whose hair had turned gray sometime during the last three-quarters of a century.

"Excuse me!" Indiana said. "We were told that we could find a Professor Green here. We need to speak with him urgently."

As the woman responded, her eyes looked frightened.

As if she expected a German sniper in every corner.

"Yes, he's here!" she beckoned to them. "Come, come in! Hurry!"

Together with Liz and Raymond, Indiana entered the small hut. They found themselves in a cozy farmer's cottage of white clay. The walls were covered in all kinds of woven tapestries, adorned with hand-carved Madonnas.

On a large wooden table that stood beside the stone oven, there were some candles.

The farmer's wife shut the door again carefully so that no light would escape to the outside. Nobody in Warwari, the remote mountain village, was interested in presenting themselves as a target for the German bombing raids, like in Maleme.

"Wait. I'll get the professor. He has already gone to bed."

She disappeared into a neighboring room separated by a curtain, and came back minutes later with a bent, gray-haired man who was unmistakably British. He had put on a dressing gown that probably would not have seemed out of place in Buckingham Palace, and he put on his spectacles to take a look at the new arrivals with a distinguished air.

"Yes, you wanted to see me?"

Indiana wanted to tell why they had come, but as soon as had he given his name, the professor interrupted him.

"Dr. Jones? *The* Dr. Jones?" he cried, and it did not escape Indiana's notice that Liz, who was standing a few yards away, rolled her eyes as if to say: Now comes the usual I-know-all-about-your-adventures speech. "I've heard a lot about you." Green took a few moments to inspect Indiana from top to bottom. "But I must admit that I pictured you a little differently. A little more — well, how can I say it? — polished."

Well done! Liz's eyes sparkled. Indiana wondered why she even needed such a sassy mouth, when her glances could speak such volumes.

“You should visit me sometime at the university in Washington,” he said, turning to the professor, without missing a beat. “Maybe there I would better meet your expectations.”

“Oh, please don’t be offended. After all, I’ve also heard about your many adventures. And I imagine such experiences require more practical clothing. What was that nick-name you’d given yourself, again? Something to do with India, I believe?”

“Indiana,” Indiana offered.

“Indiana, that’s right.” Green nodded slowly. “Tell me, in these troubled times, what in the world brings you to Crete? And then to my doorstep?”

“Well, Professor Green, that’s a long story.”

“In that case,” Green said, pointing to the wooden table, “you should probably have a seat. Mira, get us a pot of tea please, and bring something to eat. Our guests must be hungry.”

In fact, they were. Even though there were only a hundred miles between Maleme and Warwari, the trip to the little mountain village had taken them a whole day, and apart from the few pieces of salted fish they had bought in a fishing village that afternoon, they hadn’t had a bite to eat. It had been an adventure in itself to drive with head-lights switched off in the dark of night through the rugged mountains of Crete, along a road that appeared to be little more than a donkey path and often took them without warning dangerously close to a cliff or a ravine. Eventually they gave in and pulled over to rest, awaiting the break of day. It was hard to even think of sleep with the ubiquitous gun shots and bombs thundering in the distance. Only Liz, whose abdominal area was now adorned with a few mighty bruises, had been able to fall asleep for a few fitful hours. Indiana wasn’t sure whether he should be happy or angry that she had chosen his shoulder — the good one

— as a pillow. Since the incident at the airport, Liz had become much quieter. Either she was still shaken by her brush with death, or she finally understood that this was a mission she couldn’t handle on her own, even if she’d probably never admit it. Likely a little of both.

At the first morning light, they had proceeded along the southern coast. Though they still didn’t drive much faster than if they were walking, it was much easier to navigate the winding, bumpy paths during the day — but they quickly realized they weren’t the only ones to benefit from the light. More than once they had jumped from the

Jeep to take refuge among the rocks, because German fighter pilots had spotted and targeted them. The Jeep had a dozen bullet holes, and it was a miracle that no important parts had been broken. They had to change a tire in order to keep moving. And even then, they probably would have never found Warwari, if the locals had not shown them the way.

By the time they reached the little mountain village, it was night. A villager had finally sent them to the hut.

Indiana was not looking forward to reliving the hardships they had faced. He was glad that they had found the professor, and that he had turned out to be so hospitable.

At least they'd have a little time to catch their breath before they undertook the next challenge. Indiana was enough of a realist to know that a lot of difficulties were still in front of them.

"We were told," he said, turning to the professor after he had taken his seat, "that you participated in the excavations at Knossos?"

Green nodded. Mira had brought him a snuff-box, and he began to fill his pipe.

"Absolutely. Since 1928. At that time, I came here from Athens, as the local British School had taken over the management of the excavation work. In the early years, I even had the honor of working with Sir Arthur Evans, who, as you may know, discovered the palace at the turn of the century. An impressive man. Too bad he had to return to England. But his health left him no choice. Hmm, how long ago might that have been?" He pondered a moment. "That was 1934, I believe, seven years ago. Well, as the situation in the Mediterranean has worsened in recent months, the rest of the archaeologists and workers left the island. Who could blame them?"

"Why are you still here?" asked Indiana.

Green made a comprehensive gesture.

"Oh, you know, over the years, this place has become my home. I got used to the quiet life. The people are friendly and unassuming on Crete. So, I'll stay as long as I possibly can." He pointed to an old tube receiver that was on a dresser. "I'm staying on high alert."

"What's the latest news?"

"It seems as if the German invasion is faltering. The English brigade in Alexandria wiped out a convoy carrying supplies for the airborne troops. But that's not saying much." Green made a sad face.

“If these Nazis actually manage to bring the island under their control, I’m afraid I’ll have no other choice but to leave Crete.”

Mira brought the tea. In addition there was a basket of toasted, unleavened bread, which Liz and Raymond eagerly helped themselves to, while Indiana initially limited himself to sipping his tea, carefully so as to avoid burning his lips. This was tea like he had drunk in England — black, bitter and with a bit too much milk. He would have preferred coffee. But the British and Americans would probably never agree on this particular matter of taste.

Green also sipped his tea, with relish. Another pinch of snuff in his pipe, and he seemed perfectly content. But as the proverb said: Wherever in the world a Briton goes, he always takes with him a little piece of England.

“So, now you know my story, but I don’t know yours,”

Green remarked amicably.

Indiana corrected the omission. He reported what had brought them there, but he tried to be as concise as possible and leave out everything non-essential. He only mentioned the labyrinth in passing. Green nodded and drew on his pipe several times, but said nothing until Indiana had finished.

“Professor Basil Smith?” he then said. “Sure, I remember him well. He was here a few months ago. And just as you suggested, he was particularly interested in the floor mosaics, and made some drawings of them.”

Raymond and Liz, who were busy shoveling bread into their mouths during Indiana’s story, now paused to listen.

He was glad they had left the talking to him and limited themselves to just listening. Why couldn’t it always be so!

“I figured as much,” said Indiana. “You don’t happen to know which floor mosaics he studied, specifically?”

“I’m sorry. There are plenty of them in the palace, some preserved only in fragments. And most of the time Basil Smith was up there alone. As I said, the excavation work was officially canceled, so why I should go with him?”

“Did he perhaps mention something about his intentions? About his reasons why he was interested in the mosaics? Or his plans for after his visit here?”

Green thought for a few seconds and shook his head regretfully.

“I’m sorry, I don’t know if I can help you. I only spoke with Smith a few times. As for his goals, he was always very quiet. He mentioned something about a big secret, but that’s it. I got the feeling that he went to pains to avoid giving too much away. Perhaps out of fear that someone else might find what he was looking for before he did.”

“It’s not very encouraging,” Raymond said, his expression one of dejection. Liz’s face was hardly any more hopeful.

“Of course, I will do everything in my power to assist you,” Green said, but it didn’t do much to increase the pair’s confidence. “Why is this floor mosaic so important?”

“It’s a clue to the mystery that Smith was investigating

— when he disappeared.”

“As I said, I’ve been here thirteen years and I know the Palace of Knossos like the back of my hand. Maybe I can help you find the right floor mosaic. But for that I would need a few more details. Do you have any idea how it looks, or what it is supposed to represent?”

“A labyrinth,” Raymond blurted out.

“Many of the mosaics represent labyrinths,” Green instructed. “In fact, Sir Evans suggested that the legendary labyrinth of the Minotaur in reality was nothing more than one of these floor designs. An opinion, by the way, that I concur with wholeheartedly.” He looked at Indiana pityingly. “You’re not investigating the origins of this legend, are you?”

“No, our labyrinth is different.” Indiana exchanged a glance with Liz and Raymond, and when he saw consent in their eyes, he pulled out his translation of Herodotus, along with the parchment itself, and handed both to the professor. Why should they keep it a secret any longer?

Green was a gentleman in the classic British mold. He gave no impression that he would betray them if they confided in him. “Here, read it for yourself.”

The professor immersed himself in the text, furrowed his brow a few times, and raised an eyebrow. Finally, he gave the papers back to Indiana.

“And this text is authentic?” he asked, incredulously.

“We lacked the time to look into it thoroughly. But we believe so. And more importantly, Basil Smith probably thought so.”

Green nodded. On his wrinkled face appeared a dreamy expression, and his eyes shone.

“A fascinating story. That would indeed be one of the greatest discoveries in history. If I were twenty years younger, I would pack my things and join you on your quest.” His gaze into infinity returned back to the here and now. He sighed deeply. “But unfortunately, I’m not twenty years younger.” He stopped suddenly entered and added: “I mean, of course, I would have accompanied you only if I could help. Please don’t think that I’m only interested in steal-ing your glory.”

“For us, it’s not about the fame, but about finding Basil Smith,” Indiana assured him. “But I think I understand what you’re saying.” And inwardly he wondered if one day he would feel like the time had come when he was too old and frail for the adventures that were up to now an indispensable part of his life.

Green seemed relieved.

“So we are looking for a floor mosaic with a thousand five hundred chambers,” he muttered. “That narrows our choices, of course. Hmm, I may even remember seeing something that could match the description. If I’m not mistaken, on one side of it, there’s something that could be a pyramid. Exactly as described in the text.” His words had an almost electrifying effect, even more so when he added: “And that’s where I saw Basil Smith working, one time when I passed by him on a walk through the palace.”

“When can we see it?” asked Raymond, who sat straight up in his chair.

Green’s face showed an indulgent smile.

“We’ll go tomorrow. We couldn’t see much now anyway. In the meantime, you should treat yourselves to a good night’s rest. Of course, you are my guests as long as you are in Crete. I insist. Mira, please make up three beds for the night. They look tired and worn out.”

“Believe me — that’s just how we feel!” Indiana spoke on behalf of the whole trio. “We gladly accept your offer.”

“You will have plenty of time to sleep. If we leave tomorrow, then it’s best we do so just before dusk.”

“Why so late?” asked Raymond.

“Earlier today, I heard the buzz of many fighter planes, and I wouldn’t want them to choose the palace as a target just because they see a bunch of people running around!”

* * *

“Take cover!” Green shouted, as the fighter pilots roared loudly about them.

They quickly left the trail and took shelter beside a nearby rock wall. They remained there, pressed tightly against the stone, until the three deadly shadows above them had disappeared over the horizon. It didn’t seem as if the pilots had seen them. The planes did not return.

Carefully they ventured back into the open ground and continued their climb up the rocky path. On the advice of the professor, they had left the Jeep in Warwari and made the journey on foot. Of course, the vehicle would have gotten them to their destination quicker, but they would have had to take another route that offered no cover, and it would have made them a highly visible target. Instead, they chose this small, unassuming path along the mountain slopes, so narrow that they had to travel single file. Often they had to climb over large boulders blocking the way.

Knossos was less than ten miles from Warwari, and although the temperature dropped rapidly at night, the climb proved to be a sweaty affair.

Apart from the occasional German fighter pilot, it was completely peaceful. Birds were chirping, insects went about their daily business, and now and then they saw a wild mountain goat. The environment offered all the charm of an unspoiled, picturesque landscape, that one might well have mistaken for a paradise, if it weren’t for the incessant, dull thunder of guns rolling up from the distance. Not too far to the north, a bitter fight raged. There was Heraklion, the largest and most important port city of Crete. The reports that day over the short wave radio were not very good.

The airport of Maleme, where they had arrived, was now firmly in German hands, and the constant stream of cargo planes now landing there brought fresh supplies. It was predicted that soon the entire western half of the island would be invaded. Not a good omen.

They reached a shallow basin, surrounded by gently sloping hills, flourishing with blossoms and wildlife. And just ahead, on a stone foundation, rose the ruins of the Palace of Knossos.

The site was really the remains of a small village consisting of houses, stone houses, halls, stairways and columns.

Some parts of the buildings were nothing but crumbling ruins, while others looked like they could have been built yesterday. Indiana knew that Sir Arthur Evans had put up with some expert criticism over the past few decades because he had not limited his work to simply excavating the palace, but he had also made efforts to restore, or even reconstruct, a number of the old buildings. Faded murals and frescoes were re-painted by his staff, with colors that they had made with authentic ingredients from antiquity. Although these methods were quite suspect from an archaeological perspective since they involved significant tampering with the site, the results offered a vision of a glorious past that made Indiana's heart beat faster than usual.

Raymond was also deeply impressed, while Liz couldn't see much more than a boring collection of debris and rubble. Accordingly, she looked less than thrilled.

"Come on," urged Green, motioning them to follow him. "Here, out in the open, we're sitting ducks for those German pilots."

They entered the palace through the so-called South Gate, as he explained to them on the way. Passing crumbling walls, they came to an extended patio. Indiana looked around carefully. There was not another soul in sight. The park was completely lifeless.

"The locals rarely stray here," said Green, noticing the look in Indiana's eyes. "Now that there's no work to be done here, the palace has become uninteresting to them."

"I can sympathize," Liz said.

"Philistines!" Raymond complained, and that expressed everything he had to say about it.

"Where is the mosaic that you wanted to show us?"

asked Indiana, turning to Green.

"At the northern end of the palace. It lies beside one of the reconstructed buildings." He pointed ahead. "This way."

Hopefully, the reconstruction work hasn't touched the mosaic, Indiana thought darkly. The slightest change could make it totally worthless for their purposes.

He wanted to ask the professor about it, but as they followed him across the courtyard, he felt a strange unease rising within him. A disturbance for which there was no apparent reason. However, it wasn't something he could afford to ignore, for such feelings had saved his life too many times before.

Again, he looked around. And again, he did not see anything the least bit suspicious. That should have comforted him, but strangely, it did not. He decided to stay as alert as possible, and he made sure that the pistol from the glove compartment of the Jeep remained close at hand.

"Watch out!" the professor exclaimed.

Indiana spun around, expecting to be confronted by some insidious attacker. It took a second for him to realize that Green's warning was based on the rapidly approaching roar of fighter planes.

He hurried to take cover beside a crumbling wall. The shadows were longer now. As long as they stayed where they were, the pilots wouldn't be able to see them even if they had the eyes of a hawk. The small squadron of fighter planes raced overhead and vanished as quickly as it had appeared.

Breathing heavily, they continued on their way. They reached the end of the courtyard. Between half-ruined walls that had once boxed in rooms and corridors, they made their way.

Then suddenly — a slight crunch was heard up ahead.

As if gravel was being crushed under a boot sole. Indiana remained motionless. Was this the danger that his inner voice had warned him of?

The others were also stopped, listening to the silence.

Nothing except the chirping of birds. The crunching sound was not repeated.

"What…?" Liz began, but Indiana cut her off with a quick hiss.

"Psst!" he vocalized, but it was too late.

It couldn't have happened any other way. Ironically, at the moment Liz began to speak, he thought he heard the noise again. This time a little quieter and more distant.

But he couldn't be sure.

He paused for a moment, listening. In vain. But that didn't mean that there really was no one ahead! He pulled out his pistol and motioned to the others not to move from their spots.

"I'll go on ahead and see what's up," he whispered to them. "Wait here until I get back."

So he pressed on, crawling through the remains of a dilapidated window. Beyond, a row of stone columns proceeded in both directions. He chose the one from which he supposed he'd heard the noise. Cautiously, he crept forward, his weapon raised and ready to

fire on anyone hiding behind a column. He tried to be as quiet as possible. Again and again, he looked around in all directions. If someone really was hiding here, Indy wouldn't be the one taken by surprise.

He remembered vividly the paratrooper who had almost killed him two days earlier at the airport of Maleme.

Could this be something similar — a German soldier who had landed far from the battle field, now hiding in the ruins? Or perhaps an entire German commando team had chosen to make the abandoned Palace of Knossos their hidden headquarters?

It was probably just an animal, a cat or a mountain goat that was wandering around and had kicked a few stones.

That would be the most welcome scenario, by far.

At the end of the row of columns, he paused briefly, and carefully peered around the edge of the next wall. More corridors and rooms followed, their crumbling walls often only half there. No one he could see.

But all of a sudden — the crunch!

Several times in a row. Indiana pressed his lips together. He held his breath. No doubt about it. Someone was sneaking around.

He held the gun tight and moved on, silently. When he reached the next ledge and quietly peeked over it, he saw him. Startled, his eyes widened.

A shaven-headed monk in a long, orange robe! He was kneeling at the base of a column some thirty yards away, busy with something that Indy couldn't see.

Thoughts swirled through his head. They were exactly the same robes worn by the monks in Bursa, and they had also been bald-headed. He hadn't spent much time agonizing over *why* they had slaughtered the master of the house along with his servant, before setting the house itself on fire, as during the robbery he had been too preoccupied with keeping himself and Raymond alive, and afterward he had had other concerns. To him it had all the hallmarks of an act of revenge that he and Raymond had fallen into by accident. Perhaps Pierre Dumont had come to possess a relic of their order, and had resold it or disrespected it in some way that prompted the monks to commit that heinous act. Indiana new from experience that some religious groups could be extremely vengeful and unforgiving when responding to a violation of their laws. Whatever the case, it was the

Turkish police's responsibility to solve the crime and catch the perpetrators, if possible — and not his.

Now, nearly five hundred miles away, he encountered another such monk. Coincidence? Gradually all doubt disappeared. This was no accident!

But what in the world did the monks want with them?

Indiana was sure that he had met them before Bursa. So what was the connection? Was it Raymond and Liz? Did they have any prior connection to this strange order? He made a mental note to ask them at the earliest opportunity.

There was yet another possibility, and it went by the name Basil Smith. The professor had been in Bursa and Knossos, and the monks later turned up in both places.

Was Smith the missing link?

The monk finished his deliberations. As he wrapped up his work, he sat up and caught a glimpse of Indiana.

Startled, he jerked, and his ascetic face showed an expression of fear and helplessness. For a long moment he stood there frozen, then he turned abruptly and ran away.

"Don't move!" cried Indiana, though he knew it was useless. The monk disappeared amid the rubble.

Indiana cursed silently as he gave chase. If he hadn't wasted so much time gathering his thoughts — which he should have done later — he would have succeeded in ap-prehending the man without issue. So much for the element of surprise!

As he passed the column that the monk had been tinkering with, he discovered a thin cable that ran along the ground. He didn't take the time to examine it in detail, but instead hurried on. First he had to find the monk, whose footsteps he could still hear clearly. Indiana accelerated around the next corner, just in time to see an orange robe disappear through the next entryway. Clearly the man had something to hide.

"Stop! You can't get away!" he shouted after him, and immediately questioned whether, in fact, it was such a good idea to shout. Maybe the monk had not come here alone, and was now running to warn his colleagues.

When he arrived at the entryway, he forgot about this possibility. Not because a dozen bald men were there waiting for him, fortunately, but because the monk had run into a dead end!

Behind the entryway, several stone steps led down to a small courtyard, which was slightly recessed and surrounded on all sides by nearly intact walls. There was no other way out. And this was exactly where the monk had run. He turned to his pursuer, looked around desperately, and then backed slowly toward the rear wall. Apparently he was unarmed.

Indiana had his weapon at the ready and slowly stepped down the stairs. Suddenly, there was no reason to rush.

“I told you that you couldn’t get away,” he said with a superior smile. “So why don’t you just save us both some time and spill it. For starters, what are you doing here!

And why did you run away?”

It wasn’t clear if the monk understood him. He stumbled backward. His breath quickened, like a cornered animal.

“Come on,” Indy sighed. “Don’t make this difficult.

All I want are some answers. That’s all…”

He paused, as the monk stepped aside a bit to reveal a small steel box sitting behind him on the ground, with a T-shaped lever sticking out of it.

A detonator!

Only then did Indiana remember the cables that ran from the box and meandered across the mosaic floor of the court in all directions. And the similar cable he had seen at the foot of the column. And now he saw another, a few yards from him and ended at a hole in the wall, from which protruded the tips of two sticks of dynamite. On the other side of the courtyard, there was more of the same. Indiana realized he had been wrong. The monk hadn’t accidentally hit a dead end, but had meant to run here all along. Here was the only weapon at his disposal.

And it packed a wallop.

Indiana swallowed. This madman had transformed the whole area into a powder keg, and they were standing right in the middle!

With horror, he saw the monk stoop down and put both hands on the lever, his eyes fixed on Indiana the whole time. Sweat glistened on his shaved head, and it wasn’t just from the evening heat. His face showed that he was determined to the extreme — even if it meant death.

Indiana was also sweating from every pore.

“Hold on… Wait a minute!” He raised his hand reassuringly. “Don’t do anything stupid! Don’t do anything you’re gonna regret later!”

No response.

Could it be because he was still holding his weapon in his hand?

“You don’t need to be afraid! Look…” He lowered the gun very deliberately, then very, very slowly put it back into its holster and presented his empty palms. “See? No need to panic. Let’s talk this over nice and friendly, okay?”

The monk was apparently not okay. His hands clutched the lever so strongly that his knuckles had turned white.

His forearm muscles twitched. A fat lump welled up in Indiana’s throat. If the monk still didn’t understand, did that mean he was frightened beyond reason?

An explosive moment!

Step by step, Indiana moved back toward the stairs.

Drops of sweat ran down his cheeks.

“Well, uh, if you don’t feel like talking, then at least let me get out of here!”

He had almost stumbled when his heels bumped against the bottom step. Gently he put his foot on it. Was he mistaken, or had the face of the monk relaxed slightly? His grip on the lever seemed to loosen.

Indiana breathed a tiny sigh of relief. The second step.

“My God, what’s going on here?”

He almost had a heart attack, as the loud voice behind him echoed across the courtyard and caused the terrified monk to push down the lever a few inches. No explosion occurred. It wasn’t quite deep enough to trigger the ignition.

Indiana shot a disapproving glare at Green, Raymond and Liz, who had appeared behind him. Why the hell hadn’t they heeded his instructions? Probably they had heard his cry and wanted to help him. That was just about the stupidest thing they could do.

“Damn it!” he hissed at them and made a desperate gesture. Didn’t they understand what was going on here?

“Beat it! Quick!”

“You mustn’t let him do that, Dr. Jones!” cried the professor. “You must stop him!”

If the situation hadn't been so serious, Indiana would have laughed out loud. What did Green think he had been doing all this time? But if they couldn't stop the monk, then they should at least try to make a hasty retreat. The professor ought to have enough sense to...

"Don't you understand?" Green added. "This is the mosaic you're looking for!"

Indiana stared open-mouthed at the confusing conglom-eration of colors, squares, rectangles and lines that adorned the floor of the courtyard. So this was the floor mosaic that represented the plan of the labyrinth! On one side, he recognized the pyramid that the professor had described.

The monk's sandals were right on the edge of the figure on the floor, a reminder that there were currently more pressing matters than studying the mosaic. With concern, he noticed the erratic flickering in the eyes of the monk.

These were the eyes of a man who was done with life.

"He's going to do it!" Indiana shouted. "Take cover!

Before he pushes the lever!"

Relieved, he saw that Green was finally listening to reason, and led Liz by the arm back through the entryway. Why wasn't Raymond following them? No mistakes now, no hasty movement, nothing that might unsettle the monk.

But Raymond saw the situation a little differently.

"Don't be so afraid, Mr. Jones!" he cried, ridiculously imitating Edward G. Robinson by pulling out his gun. "A little warning shot, and this guy will think twice..."

"No!" Indiana screamed in horror. It was too late.

Before Raymond could do anything, the monk pressed the lever fully into the box with a determined jerk.

There was a tenth of a second of ominous silence, then a sudden roar.

"Take cover!" Indiana yelled as he tried to save himself, seeking refuge behind the stairs with a giant leap. The thunder of the explosion almost tore his eardrum, and the huge blast caught him midair and slammed him headfirst into a wall. He hit the ground hard.

A cloud of rocks, debris and dust rained down on him.

Indiana cried out as something heavy hit his body, bury-ing him. He felt as if his guts were being crushed under the weight. The dust transformed his shriek into agonizing cough. His efforts to free himself from the load were hopeless, futile from the outset.

More debris crashed down like bullets, hitting him on the head and shoulders. Instinctively, he put his arms up, but it was too late.

He only felt a tremendous blow that threatened to tear his head from his shoulders, an ugly crunch. Then it got dark.

* * *

Indiana was swimming.

Swimming in an endless ocean.

An ocean full of pain.

Pain, nothing but pain.

Again and again his head was pushed under the surface. Desperate, he kicked, thrashed about, and tried to get up.

The water threatened to drown him and pull him into the depths. His indomitable will to live battled against it, and did not stop fighting.

And someday, eons later, he burst forth from the water, gasping for air. However, the oxygen that filled his lungs caused nothing but more pain.

He moved. Look!

The voice boomed in his ears and filled the entire uni-verse. A demon seemed to scream these words, a cackling, wisecracking demon with hideous features and short blond hair. A demon that couldn't wait to dip his sore body into boiling iodine.

Indiana began to swim for his life. The waters around him had become stormy, and strong currents pulled him directly into a giant whirlpool.

A maelstrom of memories!

It would be a miracle. A true miracle…

A second voice — straight from the center of the maelstrom. As much as Indiana struggled against the teeming waves, the waters drew him inexorably toward the vortex.

Already he was caught up in it and being tossed around in circles.

Faster and faster and faster.

Deeper and deeper.

Indiana lost the sense of up and down. The world melted away into a colorful kaleidoscope — until he finally emerged back into daylight.

Above him hung a blurred, demonic figure with short blond hair.

"There, his eyes are opening," said a voice with which he associated the name of Liz.

"Indeed, it seems that he's coming to." A second face pushed into his field of vision. It looked far away and indistinct, as if it were at the end of a long tunnel. It belonged to an older man, whose face he thought he had never seen before. "Frankly, I never would have believed it."

The words reached Indiana, but its meaning bounced off his head and burst like little bubbles. Slowly, he registered his first body sensations. Dull, throbbing pain. A whole ocean of pain. He tried to escape it, but he did not succeed.

"Calm down!" Again, the male voice with the soothing tone. "Stay where you are, and don't try to move."

Slowly, he understood what the words meant. He stopped trying to escape the pain, and tried to ask where he was.

But his tongue, the dry, swollen flesh in his mouth, could hardly obey him. An indistinct murmur was all he got out.

The man above him seemed to understand anyway.

"They are safe," he replied. "They are at Professor Green's house. Don't worry. You're lucky to be alive!"

His voice had a mesmerizing sound. Indiana felt as though it would flood his mind and overpower his senses.

He pushed back once again.

Gradually, his mind began to work once more, though still sedated and thick like oil. Confusing pictures connected to one another: a monk in orange robes. The detonators. Raymond's foolish act. And the explosion…

But there was something else. It took some time before his mind spit out the memory of a labyrinthine maze of lines and patterns. That's right, the mosaic floor!

"What…?" He had to channel all his strength to his tongue, just to move it a tiny amount. It was as nimble as a mound of dirt. "What… what happened to… the mosaic?"

"Try not to talk!" replied the soothing voice. "It's too much for now. You need to rest!"

“The floor mosaic, it’s…” fluttered the clear voice of the demon with the blond hair. She paused. “There is virtually nothing left of it!”

Indiana closed his eyes. In vain! It had all been in vain.

Paralyzing disappointment spread through him and pulled him back into unconsciousness.

This time his sleep was dreamless and restful.

By afternoon the next day, Indiana felt a little better, enough to sit up and eat a snack on his own. His head, left arm, chest and abdomen were wrapped in thick bandages.

A condition that awakened in him no desire to look into a mirror. He felt like a half-finished mummy. He felt like one thousand evil dwarfs were beating the inside of his skull with sledgehammers. Whoever had hired them was getting their money’s worth!

Soon after he awoke, the older man whose voice he had heard the day before appeared by his bedside. He was a doctor from a neighboring village, who had been commissioned by Professor Green to care for him. Indiana was well aware that he probably owed his life to this man.

The doctor took the time for an extensive investigation and then nodded sympathetically. Slowly he put his tools back in his bag.

“How’s it looking?” Indiana inquired.

The doctor mumbled something about a contusion of the spleen, a damaged left kidney, multiple fractured ribs, sprains, bruises and a concussion. And after a sigh, he added: “You are an incredibly lucky man!”

“Lucky?” Indiana scoffed. He wanted to shake his head, but a sharp pain instructed him otherwise. “You call *this* lucky?”

The doctor raised his eyebrows.

“What else can I call it?” he asked. “The pillar that you were buried under was heavy enough to kill half a dozen people. You should thank the heavens!”

Indiana was silent. He vaguely remembered how a ton of weight had hit him. And he remembered the hellish pain that had shot through his body.

“Or to put it another way…” The doctor scratched his chin. “If I ever need a guardian angel, I wouldn’t mind borrowing yours.”

“I think,” said Indiana, stretching, “I’m beginning to understand what you mean by lucky.” He looked at the doctor. “How long was I out?”

“Four days. And I can assure you that for most of that time you were much closer to death than to life. You must have an incredible will to live.”

“Years of training,” Indiana said ironically, recalling Ni-etzsche’s words: What doesn’t kill us, makes us stronger.

“How long will it be until I’m on my feet again?”

He made a motion as if to swing his legs out of bed. The pain in his groin led him to cancel the project immediately.

“On your feet?” The humorless laugh of the doctor did not inspire optimism. “Don’t be ridiculous! For the next few days, I have prescribed strict bed rest. You have a lot of healing to do.” He stood up. “And until then we’ll be seeing a lot of each other!”

He said goodbye and left the alcove, separated by a curtain. Indiana heard him speaking quietly to Mira and Liz outside before he left the farmer’s cottage. Shortly afterward, Basil’s daughter entered the room.

The demon from his delirium had transformed back into a lovely young woman. Slowly, she approached him, smiling shyly.

“I’m glad you’re feeling better,” she said, and it sounded not just honest, but almost as if it were meant as a peace offering. “We were all so worried about you.”

Indiana nodded slowly. He would certainly have made his gratitude known, had he in the past few days been able to do so. The thought reminded him to whom he was indebted for all this.

“Where are Raymond and Professor Green?” he asked.

“I haven’t seen either of them. Did anything happen to them?”

“Both are doing well,” said Liz. “The explosion didn’t hurt any of us. The wall protected us.” She sounded almost embarrassed about it. “Right now they’re trying to find some gas for the Jeep. They should be back this evening.”

“Good,” said Indiana, nodding grimly, as much as his headache allowed. He had a bone to pick with Raymond.

If it weren’t for his idiotic and suicidal heroics, both he and the mosaic would be in great shape. The situation had been under control. And even if he himself had been fortunate enough to survive the explosion, the labyrinth’s plans were lost forever. The entire trip to Crete had been in vain. Thanks, Raymond!

Liz seemed to suspect what thoughts were going on behind his eyes. She fidgeted nervously with her hands.

“Don’t go too hard on him about the courtyard, please,”
she asked meekly. “He’s spent the last few days in utter anguish.”
“Well I should hope so!”
“Believe me, he knows what a monstrously stupid thing he did,” she said, adding emphatically, “And besides, last night he risked his life to sneak into an archaeological museum in occupied Heraklion, with the professor. The Germans almost caught them. There was even gunfire.”
Indiana made a puzzled face. What were they up to?
“At the museum?” he repeated, puzzled. “What did they want there?”
“They were after the plans, the ones Sir Arthur Evans made a few years ago,” Liz said, letting the cat out of the bag. “A scale reproduction of the mosaic floor!”
Indiana took a second to digest the news. Part of his anger at Raymond suddenly evaporated. But just a part!
There was still enough anger left to pound that annoyance incarnate into the ground.
“Then, we have the plans of the labyrinth,” he asked, obtusely.
Liz nodded eagerly, and beamed at him.
“We have them!”
“Why didn’t you say so sooner?” He could feel the curiosity awakening in him. “Are the plans here in the house? Can I see them?”
She stood up, but hesitated. She looked at him pleadingly.
“Will you be lenient towards Raymond?” A violent response leaped to his lips, but he swallowed it down. Suddenly it struck him as odd that Liz was now sticking up for her brother, when usually they didn’t miss an opportunity to heap abuse on one another.
“I’ll give him full credit for his services,” he replied diplomatically. A phrase that sounded like it could have been formulated by Grisswald, he thought, and as a concession, he added, “Don’t worry, I won’t tear his head off.”
He grinned slightly and motioned stiffly. “As if I could, in my condition.”
The argument seemed to convince her. She left the room and came back shortly afterward with a large, rolled-up parchment. Indiana groaned as he sat up straight and carefully unrolled the scroll. His memory of the mosaic floor was too hazy to assess

whether the details were accurate. In any case, they gave the impression of careful work.

The pyramid was present.

He didn't get to study the plans long, because at that moment a sound came from the door of the farmer's cottage, a loud, demanding pound.

Liz winced and rose fearfully. The look she exchanged with Indiana said that both were thinking the same thing.

The Germans!

He realized that he hadn't even asked about the military situation on Crete. Liz had mentioned that Heraklion was already occupied by the invaders. If the capital had fallen, the fate of the rest of the island was settled. But he refrained from asking any questions for the time being.

Liz reached for his gun, which lay on a shelf, and held it with a determined expression. She crept to the curtains and peered cautiously through a gap. Indiana was surprised to see how much of a fighter the young woman had become. The last few days had left their mark. Liz had grown — not older, but more experienced. It suited her.

He heard Mira unlock the door, and an excited voice speaking Greek, somehow familiar to him though he couldn't explain how, rushed in from outside. With relief, he saw Liz relax, as she lowered the weapon and gave the farmer a signal.

"It's okay," she said. "Let him come in."

Boot steps approached, and soon a familiar figure in a Greek uniform entered the room.

"Dimitrios!" he exclaimed in surprise. "What are you doing here?"

"I was looking for you," he said, sizing up Indiana and his associates with a worried look. "What's happened to you? Were you caught in a German bombing raid?"

"If only that was it!" sighed Indiana, though for Liz's sake he declined to elaborate. "Let's talk about something else. Like why you were looking for us."

"I came here to warn you. There is bad news."

"There seems to be a lot of that going around. So what is it now?"

"I do not know how much you know about the military situation," Dimitrios began. "The Germans have now taken all the major cities and ports, and also all three airports are in their hands. Although

they have had some terrible losses, every hour they move forward. The few remaining defenses will not hold for long." He took a deep breath. "The Allied Command has therefore issued a new order to all soldiers: retreat."

This was news indeed, and it could not have been worse.

"Does that mean," Liz said incredulously, "that Crete will be lost?"

"That's right! The German invasion cannot be stopped."

And in a bitter tone, the Greek added: "Sometimes it seems to me that no one will ever stop the Germans!"

"It can't go on like this forever," Indiana said quietly.

"One day the Third Reich will choke on its own ambition."

"Wise words! I hope they will prove to be true." Dimitrios looked at him seriously. "You should leave the island as quickly as possible. It certainly will not take the Germans long to show up in the mountains, and then things will become uncomfortable."

"And how do we get out of here?" Liz exclaimed. "You said yourself that all the airports are occupied."

"And escape by ship is nearly as hopeless," Dimitrios added. "The few fishing boats in the south are already completely overwhelmed." He smiled. "But that is why I am here. In two days, the English barracks that houses the Allied troops east of Crete will evacuate to Egypt at dawn.

If you arrive there early, I'll make sure you get passage. I have certain contacts..."

"Egypt!" Liz exclaimed, snapping her fingers. "That's where we wanted to go next anyway!"

Indiana wasn't infected by their enthusiasm.

"Won't the evacuation be strictly monitored?" he asked.

"The hell it will! It will be a huge mess. In addition, there will be many civilians trying to escape. Inevitably, a few will slip aboard." He looked at Indiana skeptically.

"But in your state I doubt that you will make it to the coast at all."

Indiana knew that his statement was spot on. At the moment, he couldn't imagine even standing on his own for at least another week — let alone walking anywhere.

Now he knew that he that he had only 48 hours. He had better start training as quickly as possible.

"We'll see about that...!" he growled and slowly pushed his legs over the edge of the bed. It took much more than just his strength.

“Are you crazy?” Liz made a horrified face. “What are you doing?”

Indiana gritted his teeth, trying not to groan.

“I’m getting up,” he hissed, his jaw clenched. “What does it look like?”

“This is madness!” she cried. “Complete madness!

You have been out for days! The doctor said you need…”

“The doctor didn’t know,” he interrupted, “that the Germans won the battle for Crete!”

He tried to pry himself off the bed, but now it felt like red-hot needles pierced his body. With a pained groan, he sank back.

“You should not try too hard,” said Dimitrios, compas-sionately. “You are very weak.”

Indiana held out an arm.

“Well then give me a hand!”

With his help, he managed to get up, even if he couldn’t say how. His body was immersed in molten lava. He fought against the red mist that danced before his eyes.

He managed to take eight or ten uncertain steps — or was it only two and a half? — before the Greek gently led him back to the bed and he lay down once more.

Indiana was breathing heavily. What he had done to himself over the last few minutes, a Thai torturer could not have done better. It took forever for the pain to decline enough to allow rational thought.

“I must go,” Dimitrios said quietly. “I’ll send you a message with the exact meeting place. Remember, two days at dawn.”

“We will… we’ll see you there,” Indiana gasped.

“Good,” Dimitrios said curtly. But his tone betrayed that he did not hold out much hope for their reunion.

And he was right. It was the last time they would see Dimitrios alive.

* * *

The fiery orb of the sun pushed a quarter inch above the horizon, beyond the Mediterranean Sea, and began its climb into the clear blue sky. Its glittering reflection danced on the waves. It was an impressive spectacle, if you could see it.

Indiana did not have a single peek at the magnificent sunrise left in him. He sat hunched over the steering wheel of the Jeep, his eyes

closed as he tried to fight off the rigors of nighttime travel. His physical condition approximated that of a piece of used chewing gum, and his head throbbed wildly, while a seductive voice tried to persuade him to give up and just lie down and fall sleep — no matter what the cost.

They had left Warwari at midnight. Professor Green had refused to accompany them. He didn't want to leave his new home. He hoped that as a scientist the Germans would go easy on him. As much as Indiana wanted to think he was right, he didn't really believe it. Still, he couldn't help but admire the professor's courage. During the trip, there wasn't much more for him to do than to hang onto his seat so that he wouldn't fall out of the open car. In his weakened state, he was banned from sitting behind the wheel, so he had to trust in Raymond's driving abilities, which turned out to be quite considerable, he had to admit. After a few hours, they were joined by a New Zealand convoy, and together they finally reached the little bay at the northeast end of Crete. There had been no major incidents. But the drive over the bumpy roads had shaken Indiana so much that he felt as though all his wounds were brand new.

The vehicles and soldiers of the Allied forces were gathering in the vast bay. More were constantly flowing in.

As Dimitrios had predicted, it was a mess, as the whole thing looked more like a stampede than a organized evacuation. After all, everyone had seen what the German fighter planes and bombers were capable of, and nobody wanted to be around that evening when they'd again launch from their Mediterranean bases. In the message they'd received from Dimitrios, he'd instructed them to wait just north of the bay, on the slopes near an abandoned farm-house, until he could contact them — and that's just what they were doing.

Indiana felt someone step in front of him, obscuring the sun, which had brought some warmth and comfort to his battered body.

"How are you feeling, Mr. Jones?" he heard Raymond's voice. "Can I do anything for you? Do you want a drink of water?"

Under his closed eyelids, he rolled his eyes. Not again!

He couldn't take it anymore. If he didn't feel so miser-able, he would certainly lose his temper. Ever since Raymond had appeared before him two days ago, with his head bowed in shame, he hadn't missed an opportunity to apologize or to inquire whether he could do

anything. Indiana didn't know which was worse: being blown into the air by Raymond, or being the object of his relief efforts.

"Why aren't you saying anything, Mr. Jones?" Basil's worried son inquired when Indiana didn't answer. "Are you passed out?"

"I'm fine," he protested with a sigh, and wondered where he found the energy. "I'm just trying to rest and I'm not interested in your stupid questions!"

"Stupid questions?" Raymond repeated. "All I wanted to know is whether I could do anything for you. You are not doing well, I know, and if anyone is to blame, then it's me. And so…"

Indiana couldn't listen any more. It was pointless. Just keep cool! Don't waste your energy! He buried his face in his hands, and in the back of his mind he began to compose a variation on the book of Revelation: *And I looked, and beheld! A fourth horse, and its rider bore the name of Raymond, and the power was given unto him to annoy people and to banish peace from the earth…*

"Hey!" Liz exclaimed. "It's time!"

Indiana raised his head slowly. Liz was standing on the footboard of the Jeep and pointing with an extended arm eastward beyond the sea. To look there, he had to peer directly at the sun, and his teary eyes could see nothing.

"What's there?" he asked.

"Some ships have appeared. Five, six…" she responded, then paused a moment. "More than a dozen. That must be the English naval force! They'll get us out of here!"

Indiana nodded weakly. Gradually, he believed he could make out the blurry outlines of the ships. The possibility of rescue conjured new hope in him. The hardships of sea travel were not particularly appealing, but the journey would give him time to rest, perhaps even in a comfortable infirmary bed, under the medical care of a pretty nurse. He smiled weakly. Despite this pleasant prospect, he decided to postpone getting to his feet as long as possible. It would be some time before the first boats landed on the shore.

And Dimitrios hadn't arrived yet.

Down in the bay, the soldiers of the various Allied forces were restless. People were hurrying to and fro. Commands were barked. Apparently they had noticed the arrival of the ships and were making the final preparations for departure.

Indiana frowned. Something about the whole affair struck him as strange. But he was too exhausted to sort through it.

He winced as the thunder of a cannon suddenly rolled in from the sea. At the same moment, a mighty splash, several yards high, appeared near the shore.

Indiana's eyes widened. Artillery fire!

He looked out at the ships and saw a flash, and just a split second later, the next explosion hit close to shore, hurling a ton of water into the air.

"My God!" Liz screamed in horror. "They're shooting at us! Our own people are shooting at us!"

Indiana stood up, groaning. All at once he realized what had been bothering him. The activity on the shore was really a panic. Instead of gathering on the shore, several soldiers had run back to their trucks and drove away.

They had apparently understood that danger was approaching from the sea.

"They can't be British," Indiana called over the thunder.

"Not British?" Liz's eyes flickered with hysteria. "Fine, but then who are they...?"

"How should I know! They're probably German... Anyway, we gotta get outta here!"

The engine roar of the first trucks driving away echoed off the sloping hills that surrounded the bay. The shells smashed onto the beach, kicking up fountains of sand, leaving craters a yard deep. Two rounds hit the team's vehicles. Parts, both automotive and human, flew through the air. The trio could hear screams of pain. With horror Indiana saw that the gunners aboard the ships had zeroed in on their targets. Missiles rained down on the bay continuously. And the fire was constantly pushing further inland.

"Let's go!" He yelled to Liz and Raymond, who were both too stunned to start the Jeep. Spontaneously, he climbed behind the wheel himself. Raymond looked so weak, as if even turning the ignition key was too much effort. "Hurry!

Before those shells get any closer!"

"But... but... but," Raymond stammered in protest, sliding to the passenger seat. Liz had jumped in back and grabbed the roll bar. "We have to wait for Dimitrios!"

"He can take care of his own goddamn..." He broke off.

After all, a woman was present. “He’ll have enough sense to stay safe.”

He started the car, drove off and tried to forget the stabbing pain in his gut, digging at him like a parasite with every bump of the road. They had traveled a few hundred yards when a shell struck the farmer’s cottage they’d just left, tearing its dilapidated walls into a thousand pieces.

Debris fell to the ground over a wide area. Indiana swallowed. If they had waited just a few seconds longer, his pain would have ended, permanently.

With gritted teeth he drove the Jeep up the hill away from the bay, and soon they came upon a convoy of trucks and troop transports that were also fleeing inland. Gradually the sound of artillery faded behind them. There were safe, for now.

Indiana pulled the Jeep up close to a troop transport.

“Hey!” he cried to the soldiers sitting in back, their faces stiff with shock. The loud cry caused a sharp stinging in his lungs. He coughed in pain, and when one of the soldiers turned his head, he jerked his thumb behind him back toward the bay, and added quietly: “What was that all about?”

“The Italian fleet?” shouted back the young lad. “The flotilla that was supposed to pick us was completely wiped out. And not only that — it looks as if the Italians mean to land on the east coast of Crete, in order to encircle us on both sides, along with the Germans!”

Suddenly, it all made sense to Indiana. The Italians under Mussolini were allies of the Third Reich. It couldn’t just be a coincidence that they showed up during the evacuation. There must have been a mole inside the evacuees.

But with such a large company, that was hardly a surprise.

“Where are you going now?” exclaimed Raymond, and Indiana was glad to be relieved of his conversational duties.

The soldier shrugged his shoulders.

“Nobody knows for sure. Somewhere on the south coast.

Supposedly there will be another attempt to get us out of here in the next few days! I just hope it goes better than it did this time.”

Indiana nodded, eased his foot off the accelerator and let the Jeep pull ahead a bit. A few miles further, when they came to a branch on the right side that led off toward the west coast, he steered the car off

the road and stopped, while trucks heading south rumbled past them. He leaned his head back and closed his eyes, exhausted.

"What is it?" Liz asked from behind. "Why did you stop?"

"Because now we have a few problems," Indiana said, without opening his eyes. "Problems that deserve careful consideration."

"You don't say!" she cried, and reverting back to her old, flippant tone. "And just what are these problems?"

"I don't know if we really want to follow the Allies south," he explained. "If the Germans and Italians mean to sandwich them in, inevitably we'll be drawn into the fighting, maybe even caught in the crossfire. And as for this second evacuation attempt — who's to say that it won't again end in failure?" He turned his head and looked at her. "The biggest problem, though, is now that we've lost contact with Dimitrios, we don't have any way to get aboard the ships."

Liz thought for a long moment.

"You're right," she finally admitted. She sighed, defeated. "But somehow we just have to get off this damn island! You don't happen to have any bright ideas on how we can do that, do you?"

Indiana cradled his head thoughtfully.

"I did have one idea," he said. "But I'm not sure if it's very bright!"

* * *

The sun was almost directly above, shining bright light on the airport of Heraklion. The air shimmered off the runway, and the German soldiers on patrol had taken refuge in the shade where possible. In the background, fighters took off and landed at regular intervals, but for the most part the area was blanketed in a strange silence. The sweltering afternoon heat drained what little desire there was to work, but that wasn't the only reason for the quiet. Everyone was glad that the costly battles of the past few days had finally came to an end, and they were now able to indulge in a short rest with relatively little to fear. The capital of Crete was firmly in German hands, so no one was expecting an attack on the airport — especially in broad daylight. The attitude of the guards was therefore relaxed.

Many men had dozed off entirely, and others had retired to a card game in a quiet corner.

Indiana couldn't resist the opportunity. What they had planned was quite simply insane, but as paradoxical as it sounded, that's what gave him hope. If the scheme had even a small chance of success, it was because the German occupiers never would have dreamed that someone could be so bold and crazy to try something like this. Still, Indiana began to realize that most likely they would fail —

even though he had planned it with precision.

He lay prone under a truck that was parked along with two dozen others near a hangar, and peered cautiously from behind the front tire out toward the airfield. Right next to him on the dusty ground were Liz and Raymond.

The trip there had been an adventure in itself. If the skirmishes along the northern coast hadn't subsided, largely due to the retreat of the Allies, they never would have made it this far. They had to leave the Jeep a few miles from Heraklion, and had proceeded quietly on foot, on the same back roads that Professor Green and Raymond had used to enter the city days earlier. A couple of times they had escaped discovery by German soldiers by a hair's breadth. They had to press themselves tightly against a house wall or a wall niche, until the patrol marched past them. Somehow, though, everything had gone well, and they had succeeded in penetrating an unguarded section of the airport property and now found themselves under the parked trucks just a few yards from the runway. So far, so good.

All they had to do now was climb into one of the fighters, get the thing in the air somehow, and leave Crete behind like a bad dream. At least that was their plan. If they couldn't leave the island by boat, they had to do so by air.

Certainly, their plan looked like a desperate act, but over the course of his life, Indiana had found that in many desperate situations, a desperate act was the only way out.

The fact that all three airports on Crete were firmly in German hands, and the fact that he had only a very rudi-mentary notion of to pilot such fighter planes, were just two of the uncertainties that plagued them. So far, they'd managed to evade the Germans, and they couldn't afford to worry about anything else yet. First they had to get to a plane.

But at this close distance, Indiana wasn't exactly optimistic. He was quickly realizing that the last part of their plan was simply impossible. They wouldn't even be able to approach the craft without

being noticed, nevermind hijacking it. The other side of the runway was where the aircraft were serviced, refueled and reloaded with new ammunition, and it was swarming with soldiers, pilots, and engineers. People were constantly running back and forth, orders were shouted, trucks were loaded and unloaded. It was an island of hustle and bustle among the otherwise lazy and sleepy atmosphere of the airport. In addition, between them and their goal was nothing but an open area of concrete without even a pebble to hide behind.

Nevertheless — they had already gotten this far, and Indiana wasn't about to just give up and turn around. The risk of being discovered by the Germans was at least as large if they abandoned their project. And even if they should escape unscathed, they'd still be stuck on Crete.

He clenched his fists. No, they had to finish this here and now!

In his mind he had played out dozens of scenarios —

they could choose three German soldiers, overwhelm them and then slip into their uniforms; or they could start a fire in the ammunition shed, or create some other distraction.

He discarded every idea quickly. Their chance of success was always equal to zero.

"Which plane have you chosen, Dr. Jones?" Raymond asked softly beside him. "How are we getting out of here?"

Indiana glared at him indignantly. Blessed are the poor in spirit!

"Quiet!" he hissed back. "I have to think!"

He peered out again from behind the front tires and this time turned his attention to the four or five huge transport planes that were a few hundred yards away on the near side of the runway. He recognized them immediately. They had encountered just such a monster on their landing approach at Maleme. Although he now had the opportunity to scrutinize them at length, he still couldn't see any engines or propellers on the cantilevered wings. Or on the hull, for that matter. He could make out the numbers, DFS-230, probably the type designation. The question remained unanswered: How in the world did these birds stay in the air? It couldn't be ascertained from this angle. A new German technology? It was known that the Germans frequently outmatched the Allies in the military-technical field. Indiana had recently even heard rumors that the Third Reich was tinkering with a bomb, massive enough to destroy an entire city. Was it legitimate, leaked information, or just someone's nightmare?

He pushed those thoughts aside and focused again on the transport aircraft.

He couldn't believe a new, perhaps even top secret, air-plane engine would be left unguarded. But there were no more than a few isolated soldiers hanging about, as far as he could see.

The riddle was revealed as one of the machines was pushed onto the airfield and attached with a long cable to the tail of a Ju 52. Shortly afterward, the Ju's motors started, the cable tightened, and with a jerk, both aircraft moved forward sluggishly, the Ju towing the transporter behind it. For a long time, it looked like they wouldn't get enough speed to lift off. Then they reached the end of the runway and took to the air, one after the other.

They quickly gained altitude and disappeared from Indiana's sight.

Unbelievable, but true — those giant machines were nothing but big gliders!

Indiana shook his head, half in shock, half in admiration. It could only come from German engineers. At some point, they'd probably even find a military use for egg cartons and toothbrushes.

It wasn't long before the Ju returned. That could only mean that the cable had been disengaged once the transport glider reached a sufficient height. Probably this type of aircraft was used to carry supplies and equipment to the front, while the craft that towed it was sent back to its home base to get the next one. At first glance, this system was both so unusual and so simple, that it took Indiana a moment to recognize its military genius: It saved tons of fuel, and those gliders were certainly much faster and more efficient compared to a motor-powered aircraft. And the skies over the Mediterranean, whose warm waters produced significant updrafts, were the perfect place for them.

The thought gave Indiana an idea. Perhaps the risk of hijacking one of the well-guarded fighters wasn't necessary.

He envisioned a map of the Mediterranean Sea. As far as he knew, the German air force bases closest to Crete were in Sicily, though after the conquest of the Greek mainland there were sure to be some there as well. That meant that the gliders had a range of at least two or three hundred miles — much farther than needed to reach the Egyptian coast.

Almost imperceptibly, Indiana nodded. He was acknowledging that this was the solution to their problem. And he was relieved, because stowing away on a glider certainly seemed much easier than hijacking a real plane. Hopefully easy enough that he could pull it off!

"So, what?" Liz tapped him lightly on the shoulder.

"How long are we supposed to wait? We have been here for over half an hour!"

"Don't worry, we'll be out of here before you know it,"

Indiana said, proceeding to explain his plan in a whisper. The two did not look particularly convinced, but they raised no objection. Indiana was glad. He pointed to the shack at the end of the line of trucks. "We can get to the gliders from that building. So let's go, and don't do anything unless I tell you to do it."

He began to creep in the direction indicated, shuffling along on his forearms. His tortured body immediately volunteered that it would much prefer to just lie still forever.

Indy ignored its twisted complaints and struggled forward in silence.

After passing the first two vehicles, just as he began to crawl over to the rear wheels of the next truck, he suddenly froze and felt as if someone had doused him with a bucket of ice water.

Stepping onto the road in front of him at just that moment was a pair of black boots belonging to a German soldier who must have been sitting behind the wheel, and had not yet noticed Indiana.

It was over! Finished! And they were so close to their target.

He had the presence of mind to motion to Liz and Raymond to stay still, and fortunately they both had enough sense to do so without argument. They stayed quiet as a mouse behind him. Good. If he were caught, then perhaps he could at least ensure that they remained hidden.

Resigned, he raised his head and looked up at the uniformed legs that extended from the boot, just an arm's length away.

He expected to see the grinning face of a satisfied soldier, as well as a machine gun barrel, pointed back at him, but he was utterly surprised on both counts. And even better — the man still hadn't seen him at all. He lit a cigarette, carelessly dropping the match in front of Indiana's nose, then took a few deep breaths and walked away toward the barracks.

Indiana exhaled as deeply as his stinging lungs allowed, just managing to avoid a loud sigh of relief. Instead, he puffed the pent-up air very gently, putting out the match in front of him.

When the soldier was out of sight, they ventured further, crawling from vehicle to vehicle until they finally arrived alongside the corrugated iron wall of the shack. Indiana ventured out from under the truck and carefully explored the terrain. On the side facing the runway were too many open doors for them to sneak past unnoticed. So their only option was around the back of the barracks. To his relief, there was no one about, and the stacked boxes and racks of guns concealed by canvas tarps provided sufficient coverage.

He waved to Liz and Raymond, who promptly came out from under the truck and followed him. Together, they crept forward, their backs pressed tightly against the corrugated iron wall of the barracks. Indiana looked around in all directions constantly, his hand wrapped around the handle of the gun hidden under his jacket as a precaution-ary measure. He was well aware that the weapon wouldn't buy them more than a few seconds, at most. Soldiers would swarm them after the first shot. As outnumbered as they were, even Indiana Jones wouldn't stand a chance.

No, their only hope was to reach the gliders unnoticed.

In the middle of the wall, they reached an open window.

Indiana gently pushed up toward it, venturing a quick look.

He saw long rows of beds and benches, and a few tables in the foreground. Apparently, the barracks had been converted into the team headquarters. Inside, the heat was sweltering. Soldiers lay dozing on their beds, and near the window a dozen soldiers sat in front of a gramophone, listening to the scratchy sounds emanating from the speaker cone.

Crouching beneath the window, they sneaked past, finally reaching the end of the barracks. Their final destination was a good deal closer. He noted a wooden tool shed near a glider at the edge of the runway. They hurried on, taking cover where they found it, and quickly crouched behind some crates in the shed. Nobody seemed to have noticed them.

Indiana looked out cautiously from behind the crates.

The nearest glider was just thirty yards away. Thirty yards of completely open runway, well lit by the sun and easily visible from all

directions. Thirty yards that might as well have been thirty light years.

He racked his brains trying to think of how to get across without being noticed, but he couldn't come up with anything. Nothing more than old-fashioned speed, careful timing, and damned good luck.

Now, up close, he could see that the outer skin of the glider wasn't made of metal, as it had appeared from a distance, but of fabric sheets, stretched over an internal frame. Presumably this was to keep it as light as possible. There was a mighty hinged cargo hatch underneath.

Whether there were people in the glider, he couldn't say for sure, but he thought he saw movement behind the sun's glare on the cockpit glass. Indiana looked around uneasily.

They couldn't take too much time to get there. A soldier could come at any time and discover them.

He drew Liz and Raymond's attention to the hatch.

"On my command, we start running," he said quietly, pointing. "And once we're in the glider, we find ourselves a hiding place as quietly as possible!"

"What if we run into soldiers on board?" Liz whispered, turning toward him.

"I don't think that there will be anyone aboard except the pilots," he replied, as convincingly as he could. "It looks like the gliders go back empty on the return flight. If we're careful, the pilot won't notice us. And if he does, let me take care of him. I can handle it. Though, I'd prefer to wait until he gets us into the air, and the glider is unlatched from the Ju."

Liz and Raymond nodded in unison.

Indiana turned back to the glider and saw with discomfort that a Ju 52 was slowly rolling up the runway, coming to a halt near the glider — their glider. The propeller whirled dust and sand in the direction of the tool shed, forcing Indy to shield his eyes with his hand. He ducked low as a few soldiers appeared beside the glider and attached it to the rear of the Ju with a long steel cable. In his mind he saw the two planes disappear right under their noses. But it didn't happen. The Ju remained with engines running in front of the glider. And the hatch was not closed.

A short time later, Indiana saw the reason for the delay.

Two fighters had just been given clearance to land, and the team had to wait until the runway was free again. The soldiers who had attached the steel cable apparently did not have to wait long. Their work was finished, and they quickly disappeared.

Indiana held his breath. This was it — the moment he'd been waiting for! Such an opportunity wouldn't happen twice.

"Let's go!" he called to Liz and Raymond through the propeller noise, and leaped from behind the stack of crates.

"And careful how you run, so that the glider is always between you and the Ju!"

They ran, as fast as they could, instinctively maintaining a slight crouch to reduce the risk of discovery. The sting in Indiana's lungs became unbearable, and each step sent surges of pain through his body. He saw the hatch coming toward him, as if at the end of a long tunnel. He ran onward, and after an eternity, he reached it. He leaned back against the side and tried, in vain, to get his gasping breath under control. The little sprint had taken more out of him than he would have liked. He felt the time when his body finally broke down getting steadily closer. He fought desperately against the weakness. Now was not the time to slack off!

Breathing heavily, he glanced around hurriedly. Unbelievable — against all odds, they seemed to have gone unnoticed. Indiana didn't see anyone upset by them, calling the alarm or pointing a gun at him. Fifty yards to one side, a four-man patrol marched toward them — but then they continued marching past, and not one of them thought to turn his head. And why should they? These launches were tediously routine. If the patrol had come by just a minute later, however…

He pulled his pistol out from under his jacket and climbed inside of the glider, determined. Fortunately, the gun wasn't needed to keep anyone quiet, for nobody was there but the pilot, who was sitting in cockpit with his back turned, oblivious to the activity behind him. Normally, Indy's wheezing would have alerted him, but the Ju's propeller simply drowned him out.

Indiana gave Liz and Raymond a thumbs up and pointed to the back of the glider. The cargo housed there consisted of several yard-high stacks of empty bags, some rolled tarps, and a couple transport crates, lashed together with leather straps.

“Hide yourselves under the bags!” he whispered, keeping one eye on the pilot. “And don’t make a sound until we are in the air.”

Basil’s children crept silently to the rear. Indiana did not follow them, but slipped behind a large open wooden box that was mounted to the hull just behind the hatch.

Inside were tools, lots of rope, and a tangled mess of every other type of equipment that one might need on such a flight.

With satisfaction he saw that Raymond and Liz had completely disappeared under the sacks, but when he started to turn forward again, he felt his elbow hit against something. He spun around, but before he could stop it the damage had already been done. An arm-length wrench that had been lying on the edge of the box tumbled down and landed on another tool with a loud, inescapable clank.

Indy froze — and a moment later ducked behind the box.

“Heinrich, is that you?” the pilot’s voice called in German. “If so, then close the hatch already!”

Indiana crouched as low as possible and cursed silently.

How had he managed to bump that wrench? Usually Raymond was the one responsible for such slips.

Cautiously, he peered through a narrow gap between the boards. He saw the pilot turn halfway around, wait a moment for an answer, and then shake his head as if he had been mistaken. Indiana hoped that the crisis had passed, but then the German — a tall, burly man, whose broad shoulders didn’t look like those of a pilot — rose from his seat and left the cockpit. And even worse, he walked right up to Indiana’s hiding place.

Clutching the handle of his gun convulsively, Indiana was ready to take action. But the pilot was on the other side of the box, contemplating the open hatch with a grim look.

“I’ve got to do everything myself around here!” he growled in German as he closed the hatch and locked it from the inside. The roar of the engines became much quieter, even thought plenty of noise still pierced through the glider’s fabric skin.

He turned back toward the cockpit, but his eyes roamed to the end of the box. He stopped in mid-motion and looked directly where Indiana was hiding.

Indy didn’t know what had betrayed him — perhaps his hat peeked out a little over the edge of the box, or maybe the gaps between the boards were too big for him to hide completely. He only

knew that the game of hide-and-seek was over. And he acted accordingly.

He came up out of his hiding place and pointed the pistol at the German.

"No nonsense, do you hear?" he cried. "I…"

In his damaged state, he didn't even see the pilot's foot jerk up. A sharp pain shot through his wrist where the boot hit it, and the gun flew away in a high arc.

Indiana didn't have time to regret it, because the pilot lunged toward him, trying to smash his face with a right hook.

He managed to duck just in time, then succeeded in dodging the next blow, and used the opening to slam the German in the stomach with all his might.

It was as if he had tried to knock down the Wailing Wall.

The pain that shot through not only his fist, but his entire body, was almost enough to make him cry. Horrified, he noted that the blow had hurt him more than it did the German, who dismissed it like a pesky mosquito bite.

And then he slammed his fist, like a steam hammer, into Indiana's chin.

Indiana saw his life flash before his eyes, and then he found himself once again on the floor of the aircraft — immersed in a fiery sea of pain, feeling like a plate of steamed snails coated in a nice Burgundy sauce. Subconsciously, he felt something warm running down his chin.

He didn't even have a chance to orient himself, let alone mount a defense. The German was already on top of him, standing him up like a toy doll in order to serve the next punch — which would certainly be the last in this unequal battle.

Through a veil of red, Indiana saw Raymond come up behind the pilot. He had emerged from the bags, and now pulled out his pistol and extended it outward.

"Don't shoot!" Indiana sputtered, not so much because he was worried about getting hit by bullet — a risk he could have accepted, given the circumstances — but because any shot would easily be heard above the noise of the Ju 52's engines.

The pilot stopped and looked, puzzled, at the new enemy. To Raymond's great credit, he didn't simply roll over.

He paused for a moment, unsure of how to proceed, then settled on the most irrational response he could imagine.

He grabbed his pistol by the barrel and bravely stormed forward like a kamikaze pilot, intending to crush the German with the gun handle. He had about the same chances as a chihuahua taking on a full-grown bull terrier.

Indiana couldn't even get a second "don't!" in. The German mindlessly pushed him aside, and he barely had the strength to stand on his own two legs, his knees buck-ling. With much difficulty, he clung to the box in front of him, just managing to keep his torso upright.

Raymond had reached the German, who simply stepped aside and then seized the opportunity with both hands.

Playfully, he took the boy by the shoulders and gave him a gentle push, sending him flying to the front of the cockpit.

Dazed, he lay there, apparently unhurt. He was lucky that his head hadn't slammed into the outer metal skeleton, but just into the fabric skin.

A broad grin appeared on the face of the pilot. It grew larger still when he turned back to Indiana. Indiana had hoped that the brief respite Raymond had granted him would allow him to recover a little strength. He had failed in the attempt to pull himself back to his feet.

The German was eager to help, grabbing him by the collar and pulling him up again. He didn't even need both hands.

"Now, time for a second lesson!" he growled as he held Indiana at arms length in front of him, raising his arm to deal another devastating blow.

A tiny hand tapping him on the back of the shoulder gave him pause.

"Hey, do you think perhaps you overlooked one tiny thing?" asked a bright voice, one that Indiana immediately recognized.

Liz! he thought in despair. Why the hell hadn't she stayed in her hiding place? What drove her to risk her life so pointlessly? As if she could accomplish anything!

The grin of the German had been frozen for a second, but now stretched from ear to ear. Naturally it had not escape him how thin and fragile the voice behind him was.

"Ah," he said contemptuously, turning his head, "this one tiny thing wouldn't happen to be you, would it? What do we have here...?"

He got no further. His head fell backward with a dull, ugly clank. It was a miracle that it stayed on his shoulders.

Suddenly the grip loosened on Indiana's collar. The German held out for a few moments longer, swaying on his feet, his eyes rolling back in his head. Then he clattered to the ground.

Indiana had to cling to the hull in order not to follow the German down. His stunned eyes shifted to Liz.

"No," she said, correcting the motionless figure, and weighing an arm-length screwdriver in her hand. "This here was the one tiny thing I meant." She put the tool back into the box and turned to Indiana. "Everything all right?" she asked anxiously.

"I... I think so," he lied. Now that the German was out of commission, he could feel the previous flow of adrenaline start to slow. He had felt hardly any pain up to this point.

He drifted into a kind of stupor. The efforts of the last few hours were taking their toll.

A hard jolt threw him back a bit and he certainly would have fallen to the floor if he hadn't been holding onto the hull. Liz also had difficulty maintaining her balance. Indy returned to consciousness.

They exchanged a startled glance. The glider was beginning to roll! The Ju in front of them picked up speed and pulled it out onto the runway.

But, wondered a flabbergasted Indiana, how was that possible? The pilot in the other machine must have noticed that no one was sitting in the cockpit! But the answer came to him quickly: it had to be the sun's reflection off the windshield. He had noticed earlier in the shed that next to nothing could be seen behind the glare.

The rudderless glider rolled forward faster and faster. It was surprising that it stayed on track at all. Indiana was acutely aware that disaster could come at any moment —

especially when the Ju took off before them.

"I... I've got to get to the cockpit," he gasped. He took a helpless step forward, and when he felt his feet collapse under him, he added, speaking specifically to Liz: "Quick!

Help me!"

With Liz's assistance, he limped, groaning, toward the cockpit, where Raymond had meanwhile mostly recovered, and was now on his knees, groping for his glasses. Indiana only looked healthy from a distance. He was trying not to stress out Liz too much. But good

intentions weren't enough. Before they made it to the cockpit, his legs buck-led, and Liz couldn't prevent either of them from falling to the floor. On his way down, Indiana slammed his forehead on the edge of one of the control boxes.

"What's wrong, Dr. Jones?" Liz's voice just barely penetrated his consciousness. "Don't give up! You need to hang on!"

But as loud as his will shouted to push forward, his nerves no longer carried the commands to his limbs, and his limbs would have refused to cooperate anyway. Dark clouds rose before his eyes, threatening to penetrate his mind.

Don't faint! he thought, desperate. *Just don't pass out!*

It was his last thought before night finally overtook him.

* * *

His first thought when he awoke from his blackout was disbelief that he could still be alive. For a brief moment he had the feeling of floating in a wonderful nothingness, before the familiar mixture of pain and numbness returned, as the thousand evil dwarfs in his skull started working again. Same as it ever was.

Slowly, Indiana realized that the glider hadn't crashed into the Ju in a huge fireball at the end of the runway. They had escaped disaster. But — an unpleasant thought bur-rowed into his brain — that was only possible if the launch had been canceled. And that meant that they had fallen into German hands. As soon as he opened his eyes, he expected to find himself in a small, damp cell.

However, he discovered that he was still inside the glider, leaning with his back against the cockpit wall. Further back in the hold, he saw the German pilot, tied so tightly with a tangled mass of rope that he couldn't move an inch.

An egg-sized lump had appeared on his face, and his mouth was gagged with a cloth rag, so that the most he could do was glare fiercely. Not far from him, Raymond languished on a bench, his face green. He whined continuously to himself variations on the refrain: "Oh, my God, I'm sick!

I feel so bad!"

Last but not least, Indiana's vision revealed beyond any doubt — they were in the air! That feeling of floating had not been false. Confused, he leaned against his forehead.

But who…?

He tried to stand up and instantly regretted it. When the stabbing pain had diminished, he tried again slowly.

Now he could look forward. Liz was sitting in the cockpit behind the control stick, and his groaning was apparently so loud that she turned her head and looked at him anxiously.

"Why don't you stay put?" she asked accusingly. "You need to take better care of yourself. I almost thought you were dead."

Ignoring her advice, he heaved himself into the copi-lot's seat with a groan.

"What… how?" he asked, demonstrating a unique lack of imagination.

"How can I fly this thing?" she guessed. "Well, back home in England, my father took us flying a few times, and I tried to pay attention. I must say, this glider isn't much different."

"Yes, but…" he stammered, aghast. "Why didn't you mention a word of this earlier?"

"Why would I?" she asked, innocently. "*You* wanted to fly the glider, so I thought we already had a pilot!"

He let the matter rest. What reason did he have to be upset? That Liz's aeronautical skills had kept them all alive? Or that she had saved them from the clutches of the Germans? For all that was wrong with her and Raymond, he had to admit that when he was cornered by the German earlier, neither of them had hesitated even a moment to come to his aid — albeit with very different results. He wouldn't have thought them capable of such initiative just a few short days ago. It was as if the dangers of the past few days had forged the three of them into a viable team.

Even so, a part of him still thought it would be unwise to rely too much on their help in the future.

He looked outside through the window of the cockpit. In front of them was a clear, cloudless sky, and below them the endless blue of the Mediterranean. Of the North African mainland there was still no trace. A few slender shadows cut diagonally across the water. A small fleet. From this distance, one couldn't tell which side of the war they were fighting on. But the ships wouldn't disturb them. They were flying too high to be targeted by anti-aircraft guns.

"How long have we been in the air?" he asked.

“For a good hour. After the Ju released us, it disappeared and I just stayed on a southeast course. I figured that sooner or later we’d have to hit the Egyptian coast.”

Instinctively, he checked their flight direction by noting the position of the sun. She had held the right course.

“My compliments,” he said. “I couldn’t have done it any better.” He neglected to say that in all probability he would have done it much worse.

“All right, don’t get carried away,” she argued. “I was happy to get this thing in the air, but getting it back down safely is an entirely different matter. I’m not at all sure I can do it.”

He leaned his head back. They could worry about that when the time came. Until then, though, he was going to enjoy every minute of rest to its fullest.

“Let’s hope that’s our only problem,” he said condescendingly.

For a few seconds the world was in perfect order, about as long as it took for a dismayed “oh dear!” to ring out next to him.

“Unfortunately, it’s not,” he heard Liz say, and the sound of her voice was enough to deprive him of any hope of rest.

“It seems there’s another problem headed straight for us.

Just look!”

His eyes followed the path made by her pointing finger and immediately discovered the small, menacing silhouette that matched their altitude and now approached them from the direction of the setting sun. A sense of alarm pushed Indiana back into his seat. He was not familiar with many types of aircraft, but he’d had so many unpleasant experiences with this one in particular that he could have recognized it among hundreds of other planes.

A German fighter pilot! And he was just about on top of them.

“My God,” Liz said desperately, “what shall we do now?”

He did not have an answer. Any attempt to escape from the flying hunting machine in the glider would be ridiculous.

“Don’t worry about it!” he exclaimed, without taking his eyes off the growing shape on the horizon. “We are sitting in a *German* glider, after all. He wouldn’t shoot at his own countrymen.”

“You really believe that?”

He didn’t. In fact, he wouldn’t bet a penny on this statement, but he’d hoped it would calm Liz down. It couldn’t be a coincidence that this single fighter had appeared here, flying directly toward them

with determination. Someone must have noticed that one of the gliders was halfway to Egypt, or maybe they suspected something even earlier, when Liz first changed course over Crete. If the latter were true, though, it had taken them a long time to send someone after them. Or perhaps — he speculated

— the pilot had just taken a while to find them. The sky over the Mediterranean was big. Unfortunately, not big enough.

His cheek twitched as he stared at the approaching machine. They'd have a few seconds at most before it was within shooting range. His anxiety grew at the sight of the guns mounted under both wings. An iron hornet on an attack course.

"Let's go!" he shouted to Liz, urgently. "Try some evasive maneuvers."

"Evasive maneuvers?" She stared at him aghast, panic distorting her face. "What do you think I am? Some sort of barnstormer? Just be glad I've been able to keep this thing in the air at all!" she babbled. "Evasive maneuvers! You must be joking! I have no idea how to do such a thing!"

Indiana's eyes widened as the fighter plane opened fire on them. Like two strings of pearls, a double burst of bullets erupted… and just missed them.

But their deadly trajectory was definitely too close for comfort.

"Like this!" he gasped, grabbing the stick and pushing it forward.

Immediately the glider tipped diagonally forward, and the gunfire that was aimed at the cockpit instead hit one of the wings.

As the glider fell toward the sea, Indiana had to struggle just to keep from being thrown from his seat. Liz pulled the control stick back, and somehow she managed to take control of their descent.

"What are trying to do?" she yelled angrily. "Kill us all?"

"Would you prefer to be killed by the Germans?" he replied testily, looking around for their attacker.

And there it was again!

The craft had taken a sweeping, curved path, this time approaching them from the opposite side. Liz had also noticed. She bit her lower lip and pulled the control stick toward her, causing the glider to cut upward diagonally.

Apparently she learned quickly when it came to evasive maneuvers.

But it was an uneven match. A fast, agile, and above all, armed machine against a slow, defenseless glider, operated by an inexperienced pilot.

The double stream of bullets cut through the rear of the fuselage, leaving behind a series of ragged holes in the fabric of the outer skin. Immediately, their flight became significantly more erratic, and it took all of Liz's might to hold the bucking control stick.

On top of everything else, Raymond suddenly appeared in the cockpit. Staggering as he walked, he held on tightly to the rail, and judging by his expression, his only intention was to throw up between the seats. He had found his glasses. One of the lenses had a big crack.

"What's going on?" he spit up with difficulty, fortunately only words. "I... was back there..."

"Don't bug me now!" Liz hissed. "Stay back, and hold on!"

The fighter pilot had curved around and now had them in his sights. Liz tried to escape, but the glider responded far too sluggishly to give them a real chance. The attacker adjusted for their movement easily. Their execution was imminent. Indiana knew that the blasts wouldn't miss the cockpit this time. And he could do nothing but sit and watch helplessly as the fighter plane came closer and closer.

Already he had opened fire again, and again two fiery lines of bullets slashed in their direction. Liz steered the glider to the left, but the fire bent after them and struck the cockpit.

This is it! was all Indiana could think.

But suddenly — in the blink of an eye — the sky before them was full of fireballs. A low rumble had begun, fed constantly by new explosions.

Anti-aircraft fire — a stunned Indiana thought!

From the corner of his eye he saw it flash up toward them from the sea below, where the fleet he'd noticed in the distance earlier was now directly beneath them. They had lost so much altitude in the maneuvers of the last few minutes, that they were now within range of the anti-aircraft guns. These were units of the British Mediterranean Fleet.

A few hundred yards away, the German pilot was apparently as surprised as Indiana. He stopped shooting at them and attempted a steep maneuver to escape upwards.

He did not succeed. One of the fireballs bloomed right next to his aircraft, blasting him brutally off track, leaving behind a damaged wing and a large crack in the fuselage just behind the cockpit.

Unstable, the fighter began to fall. It had caught fire, and dark smoke gushed from its bowels. Indiana wondered whether the pilot could still be alive, but had to dismiss this thought when he saw that the craft was falling directly on top of them.

Two hundred yards, one hundred… The burning wreckage rapidly approached, like a snorting, snarling dragon.

"Move it!" he roared, while behind them Raymond, also noticing the danger, screamed louder and longer than usual. But it would have been too late for both of them, if Liz hadn't already responded.

She tilted the gliders wings, pulling it aside just in time to avoid the impending collision. The burning wreckage of their recent foe passed by just yards away from their cockpit, almost close enough to touch, so close that Indiana could nearly feel the scorching heat through the wall. For a moment they were completely surrounded by dark clouds of smoke, but once they emerged, there was nothing but an empty, peaceful sky before them.

Raymond's cry ceased only when Liz assured her brother that the glider was under her control and told him to open his eyes and stop screaming.

"We did it!" she gasped in relief, and although she still had to deal with the bucking control stick, she felt the tension melt away. And not only from her. "I never thought that we'd survive in one piece." She stopped and looked at Indiana, confused. "But what happened… I mean, who helped us?"

Indiana pointed his thumb down. Apparently Liz was so busy with the glider that she hadn't noticed the small British naval force. But now she understood it all.

"Our guys!" She cheered and waved at the ships below proudly, as if someone down there could see her. They were still several hundred yards above the sea. "Just like the American cavalry! That was a real last-second rescue!"

Meanwhile, Indiana watched the burning wreckage crash into the water. There was no parachute to be seen. The pilot hadn't made it.

To Indiana's irritation, he did see more flashes from the ships below, and he winced a moment later when the sky around them was filled with new explosions, fireballs and rolling thunder. Violent

blasts shook the glider. Liz's expression of relief was replaced by one of horror.

"My God, they're shooting at us!" she cried, her voice cracking. "Are they crazy? They can't do this!"

For a second, Indiana was stunned just like her.

But of course — they were sitting in a *German* glider. In the eyes of the gunners aboard the destroyer, they were no less an enemy aircraft than the fighter. And of course they would knock the fighter from the sky first before taking aim at them, because otherwise the other craft could have used its speed and agility to escape. But the portly glider wasn't going anywhere, at least not quickly.

"They think we're German!" he shouted through the noise, and before he could even start to think about how to correct this notion, a dazzling fireball exploded directly in front of them, filling the whole sky.

Along with the deafening thunder, a pressure wave collided with them. Like a giant fist, it reached toward the glider and threw it off course. Indiana instinctively covered his face with his arms as red-hot metal fragments smashed the glass in front of them, riddling the fabric covering of the cockpit. He felt the shards raining down on him. Then it was over, except for the storm-like wind that swept through the cockpit. Miraculously, they were all unharmed.

The glider, however, lost any stability it still had, toppling over and heading into a tailspin. Liz pulled on the stick like a madwoman — but without success.

"Nothing!" she screamed in horror, without pausing her efforts. "It's no use. I can't steer the glider anymore.

We… we're going down!"

Indiana realized that the control cables must have been cut by the metal fragments. A glance to the side showed that the covering on top of the right wing had caught fire.

"Forget it!" he cried. "There's nothing more you can do. Come on! We gotta get outta here!"

Faster and faster, the glider spun around its axis, its nose nearly vertical. Sky, horizon and the sea swirled past them in front of the cockpit. Subconsciously, Indiana registered that the anti-aircraft fire had stopped. Apparently down below they had recognized their doomed situation and wanted to waste no more ammunition on them. Fortunately, the lightweight design of the glider and its

enormous wingspan prevented them from dropping like a stone, as the fighter had. But Indy couldn't help but wonder how much of a reprieve they would be granted. A minute?

Thirty seconds?

"Get out? Of here?" Liz's eyes flickered hysterically.

"My God! How would we ever…?"

He grabbed her by the shoulders and shook her.

"Get a hold of yourself!" he exclaimed emphatically.

She came to her senses. The hysteria in her eyes gave way to simple fright. "Let's just see what we can find in the back! Maybe there's a parachute or something. We have to at least try!"

She nodded, swallowed and climbed from the cockpit

— albeit without much hope. He followed her, propelling himself forward on all fours. The glider's skin was riddled here with countless hand-sized holes, tattered rags fluttering in the wind. Raymond rummaged around in the open box next to the hatch and pulled something out of it.

Basil's son still looked like the personification of nausea, but the fear of death kept his stomach from emptying.

"Is *this* a parachute?" he called to them skeptically.

Indiana didn't know what else it could be, and the mere sight of the backpack-like sack gave him new strength.

"Looks like it! How many are there?"

Raymond rummaged around in the box some more.

"Only two!" he exclaimed bitterly. "That's it!"

"It'll have to do," gasped Indiana, who had reached the box along with Liz. It simply had to be enough. He had made do with far less in similar situations before — one time, with a self-inflating raft.

"And what do we do with the German pilot?" Liz exclaimed. "We can't leave him!"

The pilot! That's right, Indiana had forgotten about him completely.

"I think we can," Raymond volunteered, "because there is nothing we can do for him anyway! I tried to say so earlier, but…" He trailed off. Indiana saw exactly what he meant.

The German was covered in blood, limp in his bonds.

The fighter pilot's fire, that had penetrated the hull like it was paper, had caught him. One of the bullets had ripped open his belly,

and another had struck him where his head had previously been. Now, it was just a bloody lump hanging over his shoulders.

"Oh, my God!" Liz moaned.

Indiana was just as shocked, but he knew that they couldn't afford to waste even a single second. In his mind, he reasoned that the skinny Raymond and Liz together couldn't weigh much more than he did alone.

"Squeeze together!" he said, gesturing to both of them, and when they were back-to-back, he tied the parachute around Raymond's frail chest and fastened the strap around their two bodies.

"You think this is going to work?" Liz shouted skeptically.

"If it doesn't, you can register your complaint afterward!" He grabbed the second parachute and pulled it over his shoulders. "Don't pull the ripcord until you're clear!"

he urged Raymond.

Then he unlocked the hatch, and before he could swing it open, the wind tore it from its hinges and whirled it away. The suction pulled him immediately out of the machine, and as he plunged toward the depths, he saw that Liz and Raymond had also been tossed into the open air.

Seconds later, their parachute opened, and Indiana took that as the signal for him to pull his own ripcord.

His free fall ended abruptly with a jerk so strong that he feared being torn in two, as the plane fell past him. The straps cut into his flesh painfully, and almost unconscious, he fell toward the sea.

Shortly afterward he felt a second violent shock. The water had risen above his head almost before he realized that his fall was over. The shock and the sudden feeling of suffocation brought him back to sudden consciousness.

As he paddle upward, he slipped off the straps to get rid of the parachute. His head broke the water's surface, and his lungs filled with oxygen greedily.

Not two feet away he saw his hat floating by. With a quick stroke he was there, scooping it up and placing it on his head. In another look around he saw Liz and Raymond, who had splashed down less than fifty yards from him.

Their parachute collapsed into itself, and lay like a shroud over them. Indiana saw violent movement underneath the fabric, and heard muffled cries, but soon both faded away.

Slowly, the parachute sank into the sea.

Despite his pain, Indiana began to paddle. Apparently, the two had not been able to free themselves from the belt, and in struggling to do so they may have gotten tangled in the cords. It was a death trap — and he was at least partially to blame, as he was the one who secured their parachute.

When he reached the point where they had disappeared, he took a deep breath and dived into the sea. In the clear water, he was able to spot the two at once. It was just as he had suspected. They weren't able to get free of the parachute's straps and cords. Raymond had already lost consciousness. He hung motionless beside his sister, tiny air bubbles rising from his open mouth. Liz was still struggling not to drown. With Indiana's help, she managed to free herself and her brother from the entanglements.

Liz and Indiana burst through the surface, gasping for air and trying to keep Raymond's head above water. But the boy was no longer breathing, as they realized in despair. Here in the water, there was nothing they could do for him. To Indiana's relief, one of the nearby battleships had lowered a lifeboat, which reached them in almost no time.

Helping hands lifted them aboard. Raymond began to breathe again after a soldier repeatedly knocked him hard on his back, and he spit up a small puddle's worth of ocean, including a small sardine.

"You can't imagine, gents," he shouted to the soldiers around them, "how happy we are to see you!"

"We don't know yet if you should be," replied one of them, his face expressionless. "Until then, however, you should consider yourselves prisoners of the British Army!"

4

Cairo, Egypt
June 1, 1941

Indiana woke from his nap when the door to his cell opened with a loud clang. He lifted his head lazily and saw a tall, gaunt man in the doorway. The badge on his uniform revealed him to be a sergeant in the British Army. He had never seen him before. The hearings up to this point had actually been rather polite affairs — probably on account of his American citizenship — but this man had never been present.

"Dr. Jones?" It was half question, half statement.

Indy looked up. It was the first time since he'd arrived at this British military prison in Cairo that he was referred to by his doctor's title. Usually, he had to answer to "Hey, you!" or "Hey, Yankee!" and the best he'd experienced was a "*Mr*. Jones," but that was just one time. He swung his legs off the bench, straightened his upper body and took a closer look at the man.

He was half a head taller than himself, and his age was hard to pin down, though he could have been somewhere in his forties. His chin raised, his posture as straight as a ramrod, and his voice proud, he perfectly matched the image of an English gentleman serving in the army. His impeccable uniform left the impression that he was on

his way to an Officer's Ball, and the only thing that distracted from the perfection of his appearance was the mar-shal's baton that he held under his arm. Indiana knew better than to be fooled by appearances, however. His angular facial features and gray eyes spoke of an assertiveness and a toughness that he would not hesitate to apply when needed.

"That's me," Indiana confirmed.

The sergeant nodded, expecting the answer, and took a step closer. For a moment it seemed as if he would shake Indiana's hand, but then he changed his mind, and raised it in salute. He straightened his upper body a little more and cleared his throat.

"My name is Finnley," he introduced himself, and immediately clarified, "Sergeant Finnley. Unfortunately, I learned only a few hours ago where you were and made my way here. You understand your arrest is merely a...

shall we say... an oversight. Or a precaution, if you will.

Our men out here at sea have to be careful — especially when it comes to people traveling in a German plane."

"Sergeant Finnley... of course!" Indiana replied, pressing his lips together with confidence.

"Naturally, your reputation is beyond reproach, Dr. Jones.

Hopefully you have suffered no great inconvenience, and you have, I would like to apologize for it on behalf of the British Army." It sounded cold and distant, but not dis-honest.

"Inconvenience?" Indiana made a dismissive gesture.

"Think nothing of it. On the contrary, you can't imagine how many *amenities* come with a two-day jail stay. Nothing to do but rest, relax, and have a nice chat with the investigative officers. It's practically paradise. And all at the government's expense." He grinned. "What should I have to complain about?"

It was true. The absolute certainty that sooner or later he would be released had allowed him to endure without much worry. Admittedly, at first his situation had seemed far less rosy. Not that he had been tortured or beaten. No, nothing like that. He had been put in a cell with Raymond. Fortunately, Indiana was able to quickly explain to the guards that under these circumstances he would inevitably be driven to either suicide or murder within a few hours, and this surely would not be in their interest. They had some appreciation for him — perhaps compassion would have been a

better word — and took the loudly protesting Raymond to another cell, even allowing the whole thing to look like an official prisoner transfer.

He didn't even feel guilty about it now, thinking back on it. Sometimes you had to be a pig. Survival was nothing more than the art of making the most of each situation.

And the way he had masterfully dealt with Raymond, that was survival.

"I've already seen the record, about what bad shape you were in when they fished you out." On the solemn face of the sergeant appeared something like a hint of a smile. "It said you were half dead."

"Only half dead?" Indiana said, surprised. "I didn't realize that I was doing so well."

The hint turned into a genuine smile, which vanished a moment later.

"Well, I see that you have since recovered."

"Mostly. Thanks to the excellent medical care here,"

said Indy. "All the same — it'll be a long time before I commandeer another German glider." Indiana rose from the bench. "So, I assume that I am once again a free man?"

"Of course. You only have to sign the appropriate pa-perwork. But that is no more than a formality."

"What about Liz and Raymond Smith, the two they fished out with me?" Indiana inquired. "Those two are no more German spies than I am. I'd stake my life on it, if I had to."

"That won't be necessary. I've already ordered their release." He turned toward the door of the cell. "You will see them again soon. Come."

Indiana picked up his hat and followed the sergeant into the corridor. Finnley led him to the administrative wing of the prison, where he marched into one of the offices, motioning for Indiana to follow. It was a dreary room with shabby desks and overflowing filing cabinets. On the ceiling, a fan spun lazily. A soldier, busy arranging some papers, jumped up eagerly and saluted as they entered. After a brief nod toward Finnley, he left the room and closed the door behind him.

The sergeant sat down behind one of the desks and pointed to the empty chair in front of it.

“Please sit down, Dr. Jones.”

Indy frowned at the instruction. He noticed how Finnley had shooed the soldier out of the room. Apparently he intended this to be a private affair. But why? When had the signing of simple release forms become a state secret?

The inscrutable face of the sergeant didn’t provide any answers. Indiana made a mental note to be on guard.

Something told him that Finnley was much more than just a dressed-up officer, commanding such respect from the staff of this military prison.

Finnley took out several forms, and placed on the desk a release issued in Indiana’s name.

“By signing below, you confirm that you will make no claim against the British army. And at the same time that you have received your personal property in full.” He took another look at the form and opened a desk drawer. “Let’s see what we have here. The first thing would be a pistol, fully loaded. A Colt 1911 A1.”

He put the gun on the table and checked off the corresponding item on the list.

“Next, a wallet containing personal documents and cash in the amount of eighty-one American dollars and fourteen cents. A small bottle filled with black powder, indicated here as gunpowder.” He raised his eyes, and as Indiana made no effort to argue, he turned back to the list. “A folded sheet of paper with a hand-drawn representation of a geometric pattern. Finally, five partially decayed parchments with Greek text, contents unknown.” He paused.

“That’s all. Or is something missing?”

“No, at the moment those are my possessions in their entirety.”

Indiana put his signature on the form and proceeded to take his belongings. Meanwhile, Finnley went to a nearby closet and returned with a bottle and two glasses.

“Scotch?”

Indiana nodded. That had been the only thing missing from his last two days of relaxation. Finnley filled both glasses to a third. They each took a big gulp, and while the warmth spread through Indiana’s stomach, his gaze turned to the sergeant.

“So,” he said, making himself comfortable in his chair,

“now you can be straight with me, Sergeant! You want something from me. What’s on your mind?”

An irritated flicker in the eyes of his opponent showed him that he had hit the mark. Finnley immediately responded, nodding affirmatively.

"You have excellent powers of observation, Dr. Jones,"

he said. He leaned forward slightly. "There's actually something quite close to my heart. I would like to propose a collaboration. A collaboration would benefit all of us."

"All of us?"

"Yes, myself — and the British Army."

"Well," said Indiana. "So far I have avoided, when possible, getting entangled in any military operation, no matter what the cause. And it's worked out well for me. You know, I often find myself in situations where my methods would conflict with the principles of military service, and I don't like having to compromise. Why should I agree to your proposal?"

Finnley took his time before answering. He folded his hands, resting his chin on his fingertips, choosing his words carefully.

"Because it will save you time and effort. Just like it will for us. Let's put it like this: the more we help each other, the sooner we will reach our goal. After all, we are both after the same thing."

"Is that so?" Indiana asked. "Are we? And what might that be?"

"Dr. Jones, I implore you!" In Finnley's face was a hint of indignation. "Can't we do this without playing games?

I am well informed about why you have come to Egypt.

You are looking for Basil Smith. And you are after his labyrinth."

Indiana stiffened involuntarily. How did the sergeant know about the labyrinth? Had he already spoken with Liz and Raymond? The two of them were insufferable chatter-boxes, and it wouldn't be hard to determine that they were searching for their missing father. But he couldn't believe that they would reveal anything about the labyrinth. At least not voluntarily. Although — as he thought about it he couldn't be so sure about Raymond.

Or maybe the sergeant knew of the labyrinth from the Herodotus manuscripts, that had been with his personal belongings, and had simply put two and two together? He wouldn't even have had to translate the original Greek text, as the translation was in Indiana's wallet. However, this possibility seemed unlikely to Indy. What Finnley said, and most importantly, *how* he said it, made it clear that

it was not just a shot in the dark. No, the sergeant knew more. More about Smith and the labyrinth.

"No need to wonder, Dr. Jones," Finnley said, interrupting his thoughts, "our embassy in Istanbul informed me that you are looking for Basil Smith. From what I have heard, you emerged there two weeks ago along with his two children, and inquired about the professor. As the local attaché told me, you were responsible for, if I recall correctly, a series of..." He tried to imitate the indignant tone of a diplomat. "...inexcusable incidents violating every rule of decorum, which must be condemned in the strongest possible terms."

"If that's what they call the threat of physical violence in diplomatic circles," said Indiana, without being infected by the conversational tone. Finnley's words answered some questions, but not all. "And why would the British Embassy in Istanbul just happen to inform *you* about my visit?"

"That is not difficult to explain," said Finnley. "Look, my job here in North Africa is to investigate unsolved cases, those that for whatever reason the associated department could not bring to a conclusion. Theft of army property, attacks on the civilian population, the disappearance of soldiers and God knows what else. And one of those unsolved cases involved a man named Basil Smith." He seemed to consider how much he should reveal. "As you know, a few weeks ago Smith requested that the British Army provide him with a small squad of seven soldiers and the appropriate equipment for an expedition into the Sahara. He wanted to find a very old building, a huge labyrinth dating back from the time of the early Egyptians. He has since gone missing, along with the entire unit. Under quite mysterious circumstances, I might add." He shrugged his shoulders. "As I studied history a couple of semesters back home in England, I was put in charge of the investigation.

Since then, anything that has to do even remotely with Basil Smith inevitably ends up on my desk. So it was with the information about your embassy visit."

"I see."

Finnley spread his hands in a gesture of humility.

"I will be frank with you, Dr. Jones," he said. "My investigation has not gone well. Sergeant Willard — the officer who granted Smith's request for a unit — went on the expedition and has also

disappeared. And since a fire destroyed almost all the related documents, I have only a few brief handwritten notes to go on."

"A fire?" Indiana inquired.

"Yes, most unfortunate! The night before I was planning to comb Willard's office. The entire barrack burned to the ground."

"Arson?"

"Arson?" repeated Finnley, surprised. He seemed not to have considered the possibility. Hesitantly, he shook his head. "No, I think it was an accident. Who would have wanted to...?" He frowned and looked piercingly at Indiana. "Why do you ask, Dr. Jones? Do you have a specific reason?"

"Oh, nothing." Orange robes fluttered through Indiana's thoughts, but he saw no reason to share them with Finnley. Not yet, anyway. "Just a thought. Go on."

"That's just about everything. When I heard that you had visited our embassy asking for the professor, I was hoping you might agree to a collaboration. As far as archaeology is concerned, I am just a layman compared to you.

And without a profound knowledge in this field, the solution to this case seems to me impossible. I tried to send you a message, but at that point, you had already left Istanbul. So I had no alternative but to wait here for you.

I knew that you would sooner or later come to Egypt —

but I had not expected that it would happen under such spectacular circumstances."

"Believe me, I would have preferred booking a ticket on a boat," Indiana said, as he thought through the explanation. Some questions were still unanswered. "Tell me, Sergeant, why would the British Army offer Smith such generous support? The search for archaeological artifacts isn't normally their area of interest, or am I mistaken?"

"That may be, but in this case, a few of the arguments in favor were quite persuasive."

"I can imagine what those arguments were," Indiana said bitterly. "Smith promised you riches. Gold, precious stones and other invaluable treasures, am I right?"

"I can't deny that played a part," Finnley admitted. "I guess it was seen as an opportunity to make money, and money ultimately means

power. In light of the German plans for world domination, we could use a little more power."

"You see?" Indiana said with a mirthless smile. "I don't like that kind of talk, no matter how honorable your intentions may be. If the labyrinth and its treasures are real, and I help you get there — I repeat, *if* they exist, and *if* I can help — then I have no interest in seeing them melted down for the war chest of the British Crown!"

"Please, Dr. Jones! Melted down! Do you take us for barbarians?"

"We both know that the promise of wealth has been known to turn decent people into barbarians, and worse."

Finnley paused thoughtfully.

"I understand your concern," he said finally, "and I think that we could come to an agreement on this point.

Please do not think that I have no respect for historical relics. If you would agree to it, I would support allowing the initial archaeological evaluation to be performed by a museum. Ideally, a joint research committee with the participation of Egyptian, American and British institutions. Perhaps your university in Washington would be interested. Would such a scheme allay your concerns?"

Indiana looked at Finnley with surprise. He hadn't expected such a generous offer.

"So you wouldn't claim the treasure?" he asked incredulously.

The sergeant smiled.

"As far as I'm concerned, no such claims will be made, as long as British researchers are involved in the analysis. I would like to think of this as a mutually beneficial cooperation. An opportunity for the strengthening of friendship between our countries." Without missing a beat, he once again grew solemn. "So far, so good. For us, the strategic value of the labyrinth is paramount. More important than any riches that it may hold."

"What kind of strategic value?" wondered Indy.

"From Willard's notes, I surmise that this point played more than a minor role in the decision to make the unit available to the professor. According to Smith, the labyrinth has its own water source — and therefore it would likely be a very important base." He saw the anger in Indiana's face, but made it clear this point was not up for discussion. "May I remind you, Dr. Jones, that there's a war in full swing in North Africa? Although we were initially able to stop the

German advance into Egypt, and even roll back their troops to Libya, there is no guarantee that tomorrow they won't begin a new, large counter-offensive. And the fact that they've turned Crete into an important base, literally right outside our front door, makes it all the more likely. Can you imagine the strategic value of a secret base in the middle of the desert, one that doesn't appear on any map, but has its own water supply? I'll help: such a base would be critical, perhaps even decisive, in the war effort, at least in this part of the world!"

Indiana could tell that he wouldn't be able negotiate a compromise here. Finnley was a patriot from head to toe, as he should be if he wanted to survive in these crazy times. He thought it wise not to discuss the issue further for now. Why should he? He was far from certain that the labyrinth even existed, and if it did, that it had its own water source. At least, he hadn't yet found any evidence supporting the statement that it was located on a lake. Either Basil Smith had more information about this aspect — a safe assumption, since he had been studying the labyrinth and must have had more sources than the one Herodotus text — or he had offered this argument just to get the support he required. The professor was after all an intelligent man who would have known exactly how to lure the army into assisting him. In the past, Indiana had known him to be an upright and honest man, but since then, he seemed to have changed. The desperate manner in which he had tried to find sponsors in Istanbul testified to this. But Indiana was sure of exactly one thing: the same archaeological curiosity that burned in him, the unquenchable thirst for knowledge, burned in Basil Smith. If it helped him reach his destination, the professor probably wouldn't hesitate to resort to such tricks.

Indiana found himself wondering, just how far would Smith go to get what he wanted? Could he be responsible for the soldiers' disappearance?

"You mentioned something about the mysterious circumstances under which Smith and the soldiers went missing," he said, changing the subject. "What exactly did you mean?"

Finnley leaned back, his expression cold.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Jones. I'm afraid I cannot answer any more of your questions unless you agree to work with us.

To put it in official terms: surely you understand that information on military operations is shared only on a need-to-know basis? Of

course, if you decided to formally cooperate with us, that would change the equation. Then naturally you would need to know all the facts of the case."

"I understand." Indiana nodded. "And what if I'm still not interested?"

"I would be very sorry indeed," Finnley said, sounding like he meant it, "but there would probably be nothing I could do about it. Well, regardless — it's your decision.

And I think you will choose wisely. Whether for or against cooperation."

Indiana took his time. He downed a shot of whiskey, giving himself a breather so he could organize his thoughts.

Finnley's offer sounded quite credible, his concessions were far-reaching, and he left the impression that one could rely on his word. Nevertheless, there remained a certain amount of distrust. In the past, Indy had had too many bad experiences with the military and other people who were part of similar command structures, where the wel-fare of their country — or whatever else they served — was more important than the lives of individuals.

On the other hand — didn't he stand to benefit from this collaboration? Without Finnley's help, it would be very difficult, perhaps impossible, to learn more about the circumstances under which the professor had disappeared.

Thus, he wouldn't know where to start the search. With each passing day, the chances of finding Basil alive would grow more slim. In this sense, he had no choice but to accept Finnley's offer. And at this point, there was nothing he could do to prevent perhaps the greatest archaeological find in history from being co-opted by the British Army.

After all, what would be the point of not working together, when Finnley already had all the information they did? Indiana would have bet his hat that the sergeant had made a copy of his Herodotus translation. The same was true for the drawing of the floor mosaic. So, if he agreed to a collaboration, it would primarily benefit him, Liz and Raymond

— and Basil Smith, provided he was still alive.

"I can't make this decision on my own," he said. "Liz and Raymond Smith must also have a say. Where are those two, anyway?"

“Liz and Raymond Smith? You’re joking! They are still half children.” Finnley made a vague gesture. “Frankly, when I spoke of collaboration, I was thinking of you, Dr.

Jones. You alone. That’s why I made arrangements to speak with you privately. I never even considered the other two. But now that you mention it, they hardly seem strong or mature enough to endure such a great challenge.”

“That’s what I initially thought, too,” said Indiana. “But those two are tougher than they look. Believe me, I’m speaking from first-hand experience. And let’s not forget that it’s their father who has gone missing. I promised to help them in their search, and I feel bound to keep that promise.” Indiana wondered what had gotten into him all of a sudden. Without Liz and Raymond, they would certainly find Basil a lot faster. The pair would be a ball and chain on his leg. No recent events had changed his feelings in the slightest. “So if you want me to cooperate, then you have to let them tag along, too.”

It seemed to be a tough decision. Finnley thought hard, and finally nodded.

“All right. They can come.” He sighed, as if the commitment had taken great effort. His index finger was aimed at Indiana. “But you haven’t said how you feel about the arrangement. I’m sure your judgment will have a great influence on them.”

Indiana wasn’t so confident about that, but he avoided going into details. He pulled himself together and emptied his glass in one gulp.

“Well,” he said. “Let’s try to convince them together.”

* * *

“No way!” Liz shouted, pounding her fist on the table.

“Not on your life! Why should I work with an institution that bluntly told us that our father had been killed, and couldn’t bother to give us any information beyond that? I don’t care if we’re at the British Army now or not!”

She stood up in front of Sergeant Finnley’s desk and glared at him furiously, as if she might pounce on him at any moment. Raymond also didn’t seem particularly enthusiastic. So far, he had been content to stand in the corner and leave the speeches and the cursing to his sister.

But his sour face said enough.

“What has now been determined,” Indiana reported in a soothing tone, “is that your father has gone missing, but is not necessarily dead.”

“Why did the embassy in Istanbul inform us otherwise, then?” she asked angrily.

Finnley shrugged.

“Frankly, I have no idea,” he admitted. “Perhaps it was an oversight.”

“An oversight, eh!” Liz snorted indignantly. “And it was probably an oversight that we’ve been detained in jail for two days. And he we are, English citizens!”

“If you want,” Finnley offered, “I could apologize on behalf of…”

“Save your breath, you boob!” Liz interrupted him. “I have heard that enough these past few weeks.” She turned to Indiana. “Do you know what they did to me? They put me in a cell with a double murderer, an old, fat and ugly woman, the type I’d normally cross the street to avoid. She was probably glad to have fresh meat to devour, after they’d thrown me in her cell.” An angry look back toward the sergeant accompanied this last statement.

Finnley leafed absentmindedly through the papers on his desk.

“What I gather from the report,” he said with a raised eyebrow, “is that this person has just spent a half day in the infirmary with a broken nose.”

Liz looked down and rubbed the knuckles of her right hand furtively.

“She had only herself to blame,” she said softly. “I tried to warn her.” She stiffened. “But that has nothing to do with this decision, whether or not we work with you!

Don’t change the subject!”

“Liz, you shouldn’t be so brash,” Indiana said, trying to keep her in check. “Let’s talk about this sensibly. Remember, first and foremost, this is about your father.”

He had apparently struck the right note. She sat back down, with a thoughtful expression. During the next few minutes she let him explain himself without interruption, why he thought it would be prudent to accept Finnley’s offer. His arguments seemed sound, and the longer he talked, the more convincing he was. It was the same with Raymond. What followed was a half-hearted battle — a few inappropriate, stupid remarks from Raymond, and some pointed

insults from Liz toward the sergeant, all met with unwavering patience.

"Then we are agreed," Finnley summarized the conversation.

Indiana nodded, Raymond did the same, a little reluctantly, and Liz consented, looking slightly hurt.

"Now that we are officially cooperating," Indiana said, returning to the subject of his urgent interest, "don't you think it's about time you told us something about the mysterious circumstances under which Basil Smith disappeared?"

Raymond winced and stared, and Liz snapped to attention.

"Mysterious circumstances?" she repeated slowly.

"I don't know how else to describe it," said Finnley. He took a deep breath. "Well, here's what we know. Basil Smith started his expedition in Luxor. He and his men have neither been seen nor heard from since — with one exception. About two weeks after the departure, one of the soldiers belonging to his company was found by a caravan near Luxor, and was taken to the local military hospital.

He was more dead than alive, badly dehydrated and apparently no longer sane. He stammered on and on incoherently, frequently mentioning the name Horus."

"Horus?" asked Liz.

"The name of an ancient Egyptian deity," Raymond said. "The tradition has it that he may have been one of the first rulers of Egypt."

"That's right," Finnley confirmed. "The soldier seemed to be terrified of Horus, but nobody could get him to say why. The other thing he repeated over and over was that all the other men were dead. Everyone but him."

"No!" Liz blurted out impulsively. "That's not true.

That can't be true. My father is alive! I'm sure of it."

Indiana, who understood the sincerity of her feelings, gestured for her to let Finnley finish.

"I'm only repeating what the doctors told me," the latter said, almost apologetically. "I doubt that the soldier even knew if he was telling the truth. Doctors said he was in very bad shape, not only physically but also spiritually, and the only thing they could tell me for sure was that he suffered from an extremely strong psychosis, triggered by something closely linked with the name Horus. It could well be that everything else he said sprang from a sort of confused

fantasy. He also asserted that the expedition had found the labyrinth. He didn't offer any more information about the building or its location, and unfortunately no one had the idea to ask him about it. But he did stress repeatedly that the labyrinth is evil!"

Despite Finnley's dismissive tone, Indiana, who had been on the edge of his seat listening, felt the hairs on his neck stand up. For a normal thinking person, there was no such thing as an evil building. The labyrinth was no doubt ancient and gigantic, but none the less lifeless. An evil building belonged strictly to the realm of fantasy. But in recent years, Indy had seen too many similar things to discount the idea entirely. What if, he wondered uneasily, the soldier had indeed been confused, but spoke the truth on this point? Wouldn't that mean that the labyrinth was real? And if so, had Basil actually succeeded in navigating it? And had he come across something that cost both him and his men — with one exception — their lives?

If so, this *something* was indeed *evil*!

Indiana couldn't help but think of the soldier's fear associated with Horus. Was his psychosis triggered by something that had been lurking in the labyrinth? He rummaged through his academic knowledge. Horus was one of the legendary Egyptian gods, a mythological creature of heaven, who lived, like all others of its kind, either in remote, inaccessible spheres; or in the imagination of the people. And Horus was the name of the founder of the ancient Egyptian empire, and was very real. A contradiction? Almost unconsciously, the content of the Herodotus manuscripts leaped to Indy's mind: *"The underground rooms were only reported to me. My Egyptian guide refused to show me at any price, because they house the grave of the last god to roam the earth."*

The grave of Horus?

All of these puzzle pieces fit together scarily well. Was what that lone soldier said really nothing more than incoherent babble — or was it possible Basil's expedition in the desert came across something that vastly overwhelmed the human mind? Something that scrambled the soldier's mind?

All at once, Indiana's throat felt very dry, and he was convinced that they were close to solving the mystery. Nevertheless he kept his thoughts to himself for the time being. At least while Liz and Raymond were present. He didn't want to worry the two of them

unnecessarily. And if Finnley knew the contents of the Herodotus manuscripts, he may have come to the same conclusion already.

“What happened to the soldier?” Indiana asked, taking pains not to show his inner turmoil. “Somehow, I feel like we’ve been talking about a dead guy this whole time, or am I mistaken?”

“That’s no mistake, Dr. Jones,” Finnley replied. “The soldier is indeed dead, and that’s another chapter in this mysterious story. For he did not die as a result of confusion or exhaustion, but he was murdered.”

“Murdered?” exclaimed Indiana, surprised.

“That’s right! One night, a few days after his admis-sion, someone crept into the hospital and sent him into the afterlife with a blast from a submachine gun. In the ensu-ing chaos, the assassin escaped undetected. As such, we know almost nothing about him or his motives. According to eyewitnesses, he was a soldier in British uniform.

He had a very ragged look about him, as if…” Finnley hesitated, “…as if he had just marched several days through the desert. The autopsy of the murdered man showed that the bullets were fired from an army-issued gun, actually.

Unfortunately, this is about all that could be determined with certainty. The assassin himself vanished without a trace.”

Indiana frowned. As soon as he thought everything was clearly laid out in front of them, a new piece of the puzzle was thrown at him — one that fit nowhere.

“Couldn’t the shooter be one of the other soldiers who accompanied my father?” Liz questioned. “Maybe he wanted to prevent his colleague from blurting out something. The location of the labyrinth, for instance.”

“I don’t know, Liz,” grumbled Raymond. “That’s pretty far-fetched.”

“I suppose you have a better idea?” she hissed at him.

“I admit that I have also considered this possibility,”

the sergeant interjected. “If, however, your proposition were correct, Miss Smith, it would refute the soldier’s assertion that he was the only survivor of the expedition.

And so the truth of his other statements would be further called into question.” He sighed. “On the other hand, if the expedition had

found nothing, there would be no reason to kill the soldier. And it was a targeted assassination; of that there is no doubt."

Finnley was right. It was a vicious circle. No matter how you looked at it, it just didn't fit.

For a few seconds, each of them kept their own thoughts to themselves.

"Until we know more," Finnley said, reengaging the conversation, "this is all pure speculation. But the mysterious circumstances leads me to believe that there may be more to this whole thing than is apparent at first glance.

What do you think, Dr. Jones? Uh — *Dr. Jones!"*

Indiana sat up, as if startled from a daydream.

"How? What?" He needed a moment to find his way back to reality. "Well, uh, I think you've just about covered it."

Finnley studied Indiana carefully, wondering how much more he knew and wasn't saying.

"And what happens now?" asked Raymond. "I mean, where do we go from here?"

"Since we know that Basil Smith headed west into the Sahara from Luxor, we will probably have to start the search there," said Finnley. "However, the chances of learning more there are not very good. I have made inquiries on-site, but no one knows any more details of the route of the expedition, or its intended destination. But we have to start somewhere, after all."

"So you suggest we just go out into the desert and hope that we randomly happen upon our father?" Liz asked defiantly. "If all this is the best plan the army has to offer, then thanks but no thanks, England!"

"I think it might be more helpful," Finnley replied calmly,

"to first talk to the doctors in the hospital again. Then I can request an aircraft, allowing us to search the desert from the air."

"A plane?" Raymond said, pained. His discomfort at the thought was clearly written on his face.

Finnley spread his arms.

"I think further discussion of how to proceed can wait until tomorrow. Perhaps in the meantime, one of us will realize something about the case that we have all overlooked up to this point." He glanced in Indiana's direction, as this remark was meant for him in

particular. “Until then, you can rest. I’ve reserved hotel rooms in the CLEOPATRA for you. At the army’s expense, of course.

To make up for the hardship you have suffered.”

“That’s the first good news I’ve heard in a long time,”

said Liz. “I can’t wait to finally take a shower and spend the night in a real bed, instead of the hard bunk in that cockroach-infested cell.”

Finnley heard the allegation.

“I’ll call a cab to take you to the hotel.” He picked up the phone and asked for a driver, before rising and escorting them from the room.

On the way down to the alley where the cars were parked, a young soldier came up to them. He stood before Finnley, saluting smartly, and whispered something to the sergeant that no one else could make out. Not a single muscle twitched on his stern face. Indiana was nevertheless certain that it couldn’t be good news.

When the soldier had finished, Finnley nodded curtly and turned to Indiana.

“I have just been informed that there is a problem with your discharge papers, Dr. Jones. Would you mind joining me in my office once more? Just a formality, but it could easily take more than fifteen minutes to complete.” He pointed to the soldier. “That is why I suggest that your two companions continue on to the hotel.”

Indiana saw through the pretense — Finnley wanted to talk to him alone, no doubt about whatever he had just been informed of. The soldier had not come from the direction of Finnley’s office and could not have known if his papers were not in order.

“All right,” said Indy.

“Wouldn’t it be better for us to wait for you?” Liz asked, suspiciously. She sensed that something was wrong.

“No, that won’t be necessary,” Indiana replied in a care-free tone. “Just go on to the hotel already. We’ll see you at dinner.”

“Okay,” she acquiesced, still not quite convinced.

The soldier disappeared with her and Raymond into the yard.

“So,” said Indiana, turning to Finnley. “Why did you want to get rid of them? What’s up? Bad news?”

“I’m not quite sure whether it is bad news, or good.

The soldier just told me that last night the Cairo National Museum was broken into.”

What in the world did that have to do with their search for the professor?

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand."

"Don't worry, Dr. Jones, you are right be confused,"

said Finnley. "One of the curators surprised the burglars in the act, and who he claims to have seen may prove to be a huge help to us."

Indiana frowned.

"The soldier who killed his colleague in Luxor?" he asked.

"Better yet! Can I share with you the description? A height of approximately five foot eight inches, rotund, dressed casually in a gray tweed jacket, thinning hair, beard, round glasses, and also he limped as if he had a stiff hip."

Indiana stared at the sergeant with his mouth open and eyes wide.

"Basil Smith?" It was so incredible that he could hardly utter the words.

Finnley nodded.

"Exactly."

* * *

The National Museum was an impressive, T-shaped building, whose massive walls loomed just a few steps away from the eastern bank of the Nile — just across from the island of Gezira with its magnificent gardens. It was one of two elongated islands that split the mighty river here in central Cairo, connected to the mainland by several bridges on either side. The drive from the military prison through the heavy traffic and the hustle and bustle in the streets took a good half hour. Often they were at a dead stop.

Indiana had used the time to contemplate the sergeant's reflections on the soldier and his allegedly confusing statements. Finnley admitted that his thoughts were similarly focused.

At the entrance of the museum they were received by an employee, whose wrinkled nose reminded Indiana that he hadn't changed clothes for days. The man escorted them to an upstairs room, away from the exhibition halls accessible to visitors, where ancient statues, trinkets and scrolls and were being restored.

From a corner, an elderly man in a gray coat approached them. In his mid-fifties, he had thinning gray hair and was slightly bent. Nevertheless, he was extremely agile and gave off an air of integrity.

“Are you Mr. Bates?” Finnley asked. “The person who reported the burglary?”

“That’s me.” The man wiped his hands on his coat, for not the first time that day from the looks of it, and greeted him with a firm handshake. “I reckoned that sooner or later someone from the army would be by. Are you a member of the investigating committee entrusted with the case?”

Finnley rattled off a few official and official-sounding phrases about themselves, without committing himself in any way, and then asked the man for his report.

“I’m responsible for a portion of the restoration work here,” Bates then said. “It really was pure coincidence that I came back to the museum yesterday evening. I wanted to prepare something for the assistants, so they could begin their work immediately this morning. And that’s when I saw the burglars in the exhibition rooms, specifically in Room 47, where there are the exhibits for the ancient Egyptian empire. When they saw me, they fled immediately.”

He smiled. “But I had enough time to memorize everything precisely.”

“How many were there?” asked Finnley, taking command of the conversation, to which Indiana had not the slightest objection.

“Three. Two of them English soldiers. Anyway, I assumed that because they wore English uniforms and were armed with military issue firearms.”

“Did you see any badges of rank?”

“I’m sorry, in such matters I am not particularly knowledgeable.” Bates paused. “But something else struck me.

These two men, the soldiers, were rather unkempt. Their uniforms looked shabby, as if… as if…” Bates was looking for the right word.

“As if they had marched for several days though the desert?” Indiana volunteered.

Bates looked at him in awe.

“Yeah, right,” he said, amazed. “How did you know?”

Indiana exchanged a meaningful glance with the sergeant.

“Oh, just a guess,” he replied evasively.

“What about the third man?” asked Finnley. “Can you describe him?”

“Of course. I told the local police everything this morning, but if you want…”

The curator repeated the whole story that Indiana had just heard from Finnley. And until now he had not really wanted to believe it, but it was getting to be a certainty: The third intruder was none other than Basil Smith.

The professor was alive — and he was here, in the middle of Cairo!

“In contrast to the two soldiers, he made a very neat impression,” Bates concluded. “He looked nothing like a man who would commit such an intrusion. He just looked so… so trustworthy.”

“Would you recognize him?” inquired Finnley.

“Sure. Anywhere.”

“Good.” Finnley pulled a photo out of his pocket, one Indiana recognized as a portrait of Basil Smith. The sergeant was nothing if not well prepared, he had to admit. “Was this the man?”

“But, yes!” Bates shouted excitedly, just as soon as he glanced at the photo. “That’s him. No doubt about it.” He looked up, confused. “Does that mean you already have him in custody?”

“Not quite,” Finnley said with a hint of a smile. “But we are close on his heels. Say, Mr. Bates, one thing is not entirely clear. If two of these intruders were armed, then why did they flee when you showed up?”

The curator shrugged his shoulders.

“I can’t say. Perhaps they weren’t sure if I was alone, and didn’t want to take any unnecessary risks.”

“Hm,” Finnley groaned thoughtfully. He put the photo back. “Now for something completely different. What was actually stolen? Or did you disturb the burglars before they could steal anything?”

“No, unfortunately not. But so far we have only found one piece missing.” Bates shook his head. “And there were much more valuable artifacts in the same room. Some of them were made of pure gold.”

“So the burglars left everything except for this one piece,”

said Finnley. “What was it?”

“A small wooden statuette, not more than eight inches tall. A piece from the early days of the Old Kingdom, some five thousand years old. It represents one of the ancient deities.”

“A god?” Indiana asked suspiciously. “Which one?”

“Horus.”

“Horus?” Indiana and Finnley asked in unison, and again they exchanged a meaningful look.

“Yes,” confirmed Bates, irritated. “Why are you surprised about it? Does that mean something special? What do you know?”

“No.” Finnley cleared his throat, then added calmly:

“At least, there’s no information we can share with you.”

“I hear you,” said Bates, dejected. “It’s a secret, right?”

“Something like that,” Finnley said evasively. “What else can you tell us about the statue that was stolen by these burglars? Was it valuable?”

For some reason, the question seemed to amuse Bates.

“Do you want to hear it in pounds or dollars?”

“Either,” Finnley assured him, “we know the current exchange rate.”

“Well, then I would say…” Bates smiled enigmatically:

“… about ten to twenty English pounds.”

“Ten to twenty pounds?” Indiana felt his leg was being pulled. “What do you mean? Even if the statue were made of wood, a five-thousand-year-old piece would be worth more than that.”

“A five-thousand-year-old piece, sure,” Bates admitted,

“but the burglars didn’t take the real statue!”

“Does that mean that you still have the original?” asked Indiana.

“Yes. Come with me!” Bates motioned them to follow him. “I’ll show you.”

He led them to one of the shelves high overhead, one that was piled with countless wooden crates and boxes almost to the ceiling of the room. From one of them, he pulled out an object that had been lying in a soft bed of sawdust. It was about a hand’s span in height, a slender wooden figure, representing an upright man — a man on whose shoulders there rested a falcon’s head instead of a human’s.

“This here is the real statue of Horus,” Bates said. “As luck would have it, we took it a few days ago for restoration and replaced it with a copy. We will provide it with a thin, preservative coating, to protect it from further decay.”

“Is it customary to replace such items with copies?”

asked Finnley.

“Sure. And not only then. Few visitors realize that only half of the artifacts in the exhibition rooms are real. Most pieces are merely replicas, either because the originals are too precious, or because they are being restored, as in this case, or just because they have been lent out for exhibition at other museums. For many simple items we even have multiple copies. Like for this statue.”

From another box, he pulled out a second statuette that with the first looked like two peas in a pod, and handed both to Indiana, soliciting the opinion of an expert.

Indiana weighed both figures in his hands, examining them closely. At first blush, no difference could be seen.

The second figure was an almost perfect copy of the original. But only almost. On closer inspection, the colors of the copy were a little fuller, and the surface felt a little different. The ravages of five thousand years were not so easy to imitate.

However, Indiana thought that a man with the experience and knowledge of a Basil Smith also would have noticed! In his hurry, could the professor have made just such a mistake? The copy was good, but on closer inspection, the differences were clear.

He gave the two statuettes back to Bates, and while the latter tucked them back into their boxes, Indiana pulled Finnley aside to whisper to him his thoughts. The sergeant nodded thoughtfully.

“Maybe Smith was interrupted before he was able to give the figure a close look,” he speculated.

“Perhaps,” said Indiana. In fact, this was a reasonable explanation. One of many possibilities. He stopped short.

“Wait a minute! This could mean that when Smith notices the error, he might try again…”

“Yes,” Finnley interrupted suddenly, before he could finish the sentence. “That would be good!”

“Is this something I could help with?” volunteered Bates behind them.

They turned back to the curator.

“No,” said Finnley. “That’s all for now. Thank you very much. I would recommend, though, that you store the real statue someplace safer than an open box.”

“You think the burglars might come back?” Bates asked incredulously. He shook his head. “I can’t imagine that someone would be so bold.”

“We can’t rule it out. The very fact that they only took that piece, showing no interest in the more valuable pieces, is evidence that we are not dealing with ordinary burglars here. Who knows what’s going on in their heads? When they realize that they have only a worthless copy, they may well decide to try it a second time.”

“Good,” said Bates. “If you think so, I’ll make sure that it’s locked up in one of the safes.”

“At least for the next few days,” Finnley suggested. He thought for a moment. “And just to be on the safe side, in the meantime I will leave a couple of soldiers to keep an eye on the museum around the clock. That way, if the burglars show up again, we’ll catch them immediately.”

“If you say so,” said Bates. “However, you should let the director know about all this. I cannot authorize it myself.

At this hour, I believe he should be at home.”

“Very good! I will phone him at once.” Finnley tapped his uniform cap. “That’s about it for now. Have a nice day.”

“You too. Shall I escort you out?”

“Thank you. We can find the way on our own.”

On the way down the spiral staircase to the ground floor, Finnley turned to Indiana.

“Have you any idea why Basil Smith is so keen on this statue of Horus?” he asked. “So keen that he’d even risk prison over it.”

“I haven’t the faintest idea,” said Indy. “But I’m wondering if we’ve misjudged the professor, denouncing him from the outset as the mastermind behind the whole operation, just because he was present at the burglary. Under certain circumstances, he may have been forced to participate.”

“By the two soldiers?”

Indiana managed a combination of a nod and a shrug.

“Why not?” he said, but not sounding totally convinced.

“I could even imagine him picking the wrong statuette deliberately, when the opportunity presented itself.”

“I’m really not sure, Dr. Jones. I admire your loyalty, trying to defend Smith’s actions, but this scenario you’ve concocted seems terribly unlikely.”

“I know,” Indiana sighed glumly.

They left the museum.

“At least we have a whole lot of news to show for our efforts,” Finnley said, highlighting the positive aspects of their visit. “We know that Smith is still alive, and apparently so are some of his companions from the support team. And we know that this deity Horus plays an important role.”

“Yeah, sure,” Indiana agreed sarcastically. “We don’t know yet what it all means, but at least we know that it means something! It’s truly a big step forward. What do we have to worry about?”

Finnley looked at him with surprise, and then a shame-less grin appeared on his face.

“I didn’t realize, Dr. Jones, that you are one of those in-corrigible optimists, too!” he said in a tone that, compared to his normally stoic demeanor, seemed almost friendly. “Welcome to the club!”

* * *

The moment Indiana entered the colonial-style lobby of the CLEOPATRA, Raymond appeared in front of him out of the blue with an agitated expression, and he knew that something was amiss.

“Dr. Jones! Dr. Jones!”

“Yes, what is it?” Indy replied, half worried, half annoyed. “What’s happened?”

“Liz, she…” Raymond gasped and waved his arms around in the air, aimlessly. “She’s… it’s… oh God…”

“What about her?”

“She… she…”

He grabbed Basil’s son by the shoulders and shook him.

“For Pete’s sake!” he shouted angrily. “Spit it out already!”

“She… she…” Raymond paused and seemed to get a hold of himself. He took a deep breath. “I think she can explain it to you better. Come on!”

He tugged on Indiana’s arm, pulling him to the eleva-tor. A little later they entered a room a few floors above, where Liz was sitting slumped on the bed, hiding her face in her pillow.

“Liz!” Indiana ran toward her. “What’s wrong?”

Her only response was a loud sob. She turned around.

Indiana saw that her face was streaked with tears. She appeared distraught.

“You have to tell me!” he urged.

When she did not respond, he tried the same thing as with Raymond. He grabbed her by the shoulders and shook her — but a little more gently than he had her brother. The technique seemed to work once again. Slowly, her eyes drifted up toward him.

"I… I…" she stammered, straining to maintain her composure.

"Yeah, Raymond already told me that part," he said.

"Now I'd like to hear the rest of it."

"My father!" she gasped. She dug her hands into Indiana's jacket. "I've seen him! Do you hear me? He's alive.

And he's here. Here in Cairo!"

He looked at her in amazement. He hadn't expected it, though the news didn't surprise him as much as it would have a few hours earlier.

"All right, but…" he said, confused. "Why are you crying, then? Really, you should be happy!"

"Because… because… he was so funny. Somehow he didn't seem like himself. I… I don't know…" The rest was lost in a sob.

Indiana looked to Raymond for help, but he only shrugged his shoulders.

"I wasn't there," he said apologetically. "Liz left the hotel alone."

Indiana's gaze wandered through the room and discovered something that was at that moment much more helpful than Raymond: the minibar.

"Wait," he said to Liz, and went to the bar, returning shortly thereafter with a drinking glass half full of bourbon.

He squeezed Liz's hand. "Here, drink this. It'll do you good!"

She looked through teary eyes at him, then looked skeptically at the glass, and when he encouraged her again, she stopped sobbing, took a deep breath — and downed the glass in one gulp.

"Better?" he asked kindly, once she started breathing again after a short spell of wheezing and coughing.

Liz rolled her eyes.

"Better?" she repeated aghast. "Suppose I say no —

what'll you try next? Will you wring my neck then?"

She sounded as reproachful as ever. Indiana felt that was a huge step forward. The drink had actually helped.

"Glad to hear that." He grinned. "And now, try again from the beginning. How and where did you see your father?"

Just as it seemed the situation might call for another half glass of bourbon, Liz came around and wiped the tears from her cheeks with the sleeve of her blouse.

“I had just left the hotel to buy myself some new clothes,”

she said, haltingly at first, then more fluidly. “And then he just came up to me in an alley, not five hundred yards from here. He was so preoccupied that he only seemed to notice me when we nearly collided.” She nodded thoughtfully, as if experiencing the scene once again in her mind’s eye.

“You said he was acting funny,” he reminded her. “What did you mean?”

“Well, what can I say? He didn’t seem happy at all to see me. And he was very rushed, as if he were being chased by someone.”

“Did you ask him if he was being chased?”

“Of course I did!” she hissed. And immediately, her expression turned sad. She shifted helplessly. “But he…

he was very curt. It was like he didn’t really see me. And his face was so dull. I… I can’t explain it.”

“But you must have spoken with him!”

“Yes, of course. He said he would explain everything to me in the morning, but now he had no time. I would have to wait. And I shouldn’t worry, it would be all right.”

She swallowed. “Then he just walked away. I… I was so confused, but when I chased after him, he disappeared into the crowd.”

“That’s all?”

“Yes. It all happened so terribly fast. Before I could even think straight, it was all over.” She looked intently at Indiana, trying to determine if he doubted her story. “Believe me, I’m not making it up. It definitely was my father!

Really.”

“Don’t panic,” he reassured her. “I believe you. Is there anything else you noticed about him? Every detail could be important.”

“Well, he did look a little sick, and his cheeks were sunken. But otherwise… Wait, I just remembered. He was hiding something under his jacket, but when he pushed by to leave, I saw it for a moment. It was a small wooden figure.”

“A statuette with a falcon’s head?”

“Yes, as far as I could tell… I think so.” Her eyes were staring at him, surprised. “How did you know? Did you see him?”

“No, that’s not it. But I did find out a lot about Basil just now. But I’ll tell you later.” He paused and sorted through the news that Liz had told him. “Tell me,” he turned again to her. “Did you tell your father what hotel you are staying at?”

She shook her head.

“No, it didn’t come up. Why do you ask?”

“Because you said that he wanted to explain everything to you tomorrow,” said Indy. “How can he do that if he doesn’t know where to find you?”

“Oh,” she said, as if this would never have been a problem. “He gave me a place to meet him tomorrow morning.” She frowned in confusion. “I already told you that, didn’t I?”

“No, you didn’t.” He sighed. “And where will you meet him?”

“At the foot of the Great Pyramid of Giza. Tomorrow morning at six. He said to wait for him there. Oh, and Raymond told me that the Great Pyramid is the same as the Pyramid of Cheops.”

Indiana nodded. At the Great Pyramid of Giza. Basil could not have chosen a more famous historical site in all of northern Egypt. He dismissed any thoughts that the public mistakenly attributed the pyramid to Cheops, even though some experts had determined years ago that that pharaoh could not possibly have built it — and even the inscription chiseled in his wife’s tomb indicated that he had inherited the pyramid, the greatest in all of Egypt. But since no one seemed interested in the truth, this false attribution would probably still be in textbooks fifty years later.

He took a deep breath and felt like he could use a good drink. After he had made use of the minibar, he shared what he had found in the museum. The two were initially quite shocked, not wanting to believe that their father had become a burglar. But the fact that Liz had seen the statue with her father finally convinced them that they had to at least consider the possibility.

“And what should we do now?” Liz asked, after Indiana had ended his report and poured himself another drink.

Days like this would make anyone turn to the bottle.

He thought for a moment.

“Get to bed!” he said. “We have to get up early tomorrow, after all.”

* * *

“What is this?” Liz demanded, when they gathered in the hotel lobby the next morning — outside it was still dark, and on the horizon the first, tentative rays of dawn were breaking through — and Finnley stepped forward noncha-lantly to join them. “Nobody said the sergeant was invited to this party.”

Finnley smiled indulgently.

“If I remember right, we agreed yesterday that we would work together,” he recalled.

“Maybe so!” Liz admitted. “But the situation has changed dramatically since yesterday. As you I’m sure you know, our father has reappeared. He is here in Cairo, and if we are to meet with him, then you can’t be around.” She stared at Finnley defiantly. “Was that clear enough for you?”

“You don’t want me around?” he asked.

“Oh my,” Liz exclaimed in mock astonishment, “you aren’t as dumb as lamppost after all, are you?”

The sergeant paid her no mind.

“I’m sorry to disappoint you, but in light of our agreement to cooperate, I must protest.”

“Me too,” remarked Indiana, coming up from behind.

“That’s why I called the sergeant yesterday evening and informed him about our meeting.”

“*You* did?” Liz snorted angrily. “How could you? This narrow-minded bureaucrat wants nothing more than to throw our father in prison and throw away the key. Or did you think he would just ignore the incident at the National Museum? There’s probably half a squadron waiting out there already, surrounding the entire site of the pyramids. Under such circumstances, who would be surprised if our father disappears again. And you…” she pointed at him, “you alone are to blame.”

“I have no intention of arresting your father, Miss Smith,”

Finnley jumped in before Indiana could respond. “I’m much more interested in finally clearing up this whole mysterious affair. And if anyone can tell us what it’s all about, then it would have to be your father. Certainly, you can understand that.”

“Understand?” repeated Liz, as if hearing the word for the first time.

“Besides, there are no soldiers waiting out there,” Finnley continued. “I’ve come alone, and so your father won’t get the wrong idea, I’m in plain clothes, as you may have noticed.”

That was true. In contrast to his usual immaculate uniform, Finnley was wearing a no less immaculate green tweed suit and matching hat. He could have stepped out of a picture book of English lords. He looked like he was ready to meet with a few friends from the country club for a leisurely game of golf.

His arguments left Liz with nothing to oppose.

“Raymond, you tell him!” She turned to her brother.

“Well,” said Raymond unhelpfully.

She thanked him with a withering look. Small storm clouds danced over her eyebrows, but she abstained from further comment on the subject.

“Good,” said Indiana, “since we are now apparently all agreed, we can get going.”

They left the CLEOPATRA and procured a taxi ride to the Pyramids of Giza, just a few miles outside the city.

When they arrived it was already noticeably lighter, even though the sun had yet to appear.

Postcards and other pictures often show the three ancient, gigantic structures — the Great Pyramid, the slightly smaller Pyramid of Khafre, and in the shadow of the first two, the seemingly much smaller Pyramid of Menkaure —

normally bathed in bright sunshine. This morning they were lying in dense fog. Only the Pyramid of Menkaure was fully visible, while its two larger cousins hid their upper two-thirds in dense white clouds. But that didn’t make the big structures seem any less gigantic; in fact, quite the contrary. They looked like artificial mountains, whose peaks disappeared in the clouds. Even to people of the modern era, it was almost inconceivable that they had been created by human hands — using methods that science had yet to adequately explain.

This early, the searing desert heat was nowhere to be found. It was almost uncomfortably cold, and a shivering Liz pulled her jacket tight around her as she exited the taxi.

Their route took them past the Sphinx, whose nose was destroyed by the target practice of thoughtless and un-scrupulous Mamluks in

the 14th century, and not, as was often claimed, by cannon fire during the Napoleonic campaign in Africa.

Liz paused briefly in front of the mysterious figure in red sandstone, gazing up at the lofty head with its inscrutable smile, looking as though it might at any moment get up and wander off into the desert. It was her first time experiencing the famous monument in person.

“The Sphinx,” she whispered. “Somehow she seems to me as mysterious as our expedition.”

“He seems,” said Raymond.

“What?”

“The Sphinx is a he, not a she,” he said. “Only the Greek sphinxes were female, this one is male.”

Liz seemed to have her doubts.

“Is that true?” She turned to Indiana.

He nodded. Yet another misconception that no one cared enough to correct.

“He’s a Sphinx, she’s a Sphinx,” Liz said snidely. “I don’t care! Let’s move on.”

They reached the Great Pyramid and stood in the middle of one of its long sides. Up close, they could see the yard-wide, extremely heavy blocks that made up the edi-fice, and were even more impressed. Rolling a single one of them using ropes and tree trunks would have required hundreds of men.

As far as any of them could see, there was not the slightest trace of Basil Smith. The entire area was deserted, except for a couple of locals: selling souvenirs, offering camels or their services as guides, ready for the daily onslaught of tourists. In spite of the Second World War, there were a lot of visitors here. Perhaps now more than ever, in keeping with the motto: Visit Egypt, as long as it’s not a province of the German Empire!

One of the locals came over and asked if they were interested in a tour of the pyramid. Finnley shooed him away with a few Arabic words.

“What now?” Liz asked, puzzled, as she looked around in vain. She probably expected her father to walk straight into her arms.

Finnley pulled out a pocket watch and looked at its face.

“It’s only five fifty-six,” said Finnley, as he put it away again. “We still have time.”

“So we wait,” Indiana said.

“Terrific idea,” Liz grumbled.

They waited in silence and watched as the day began.

It had gotten considerably brighter, and somewhere behind the fog a bright disk rose over the horizon. It even pierced the dense fog, which was slowly pushed aside by a gentle breeze. Time nearly stood still. Seconds collected into minutes, like dew dripping from the fog. The longer nothing happened, the more unsettling it became.

“Seven minutes after six,” Finnley said, after looking at his watch a fourth time.

“He’s not coming.” Liz’s pessimism burst forth. “He saw Finnley and left.”

“Nonsense!” said the sergeant angrily. “Your father doesn’t know me from Adam.”

“So what? He must have *suspected* who you are. Otherwise, why wouldn’t he come?”

Finnley spun around and looked at her angrily.

“Are you really so ignorant,” he bellowed, “or are you just pretending?”

Liz was so surprised by this sudden outbreak that she seemed to forget how to answer. Indiana was also somewhat surprised. Finnley was usually so controlled and un-emotional that he would not have expected such a reaction. The situation must have put him on edge. And finally, his anger was of course well deserved by Liz. She had made a science of driving the most peaceful people to fury in a short amount of time — Indiana knew a thing or two about it personally.

“It’s useless for us to argue about it,” Indiana intervened before Liz could conjure a new insult.

Finnley dismissed them with a wave, as though further words on this matter would be futile anyway — which was not entirely wrong. Then he was back under control.

“Maybe we’re just at the wrong place,” Indiana said, taking in the vast expanse of the structure. It would certainly lighten the mood if he could find them something to do. He pointed at one end of the pyramid. “Sergeant, you go around there with Raymond. I’ll go with Liz around the other side.”

Finnley nodded slightly. It seemed he wouldn’t mind an opportunity to get away from Liz for a few minutes.

“Good,” he said.

They separated and went around the pyramid in different directions. On the other side, they met up again.

"And?"

Finnley shook his head. "Not a thing."

"Now what?" asked Liz.

Indiana looked at her and struggled for an answer that would not lead immediately to a toxic response. Not an easy task.

"Well, all right," she said calmly, before he could say anything. She crossed her arms over her chest and pinched her lips together. "We wait."

Slowly the sun ate through the fog. The wind had become a little stronger, tearing through the white clouds until they gradually disintegrated. Slowly, the pyramid peaks came into view.

"Twenty past six," Finnley said, finally breaking the silence.

"What if our father is waiting for us in the pyramid?"

asked Raymond.

Indiana listened. That wasn't such a stupid idea —

especially for Raymond.

"No," Liz insisted, "he said, at the foot of the pyramid."

"Are you quite sure? I mean, you were excited and maybe…"

"I am quite certain!" she said in a tone that would tolerate no contradiction.

"Well, all right," he muttered sheepishly, "I was just asking…"

"We should still consider that possibility," Indiana said.

"I mean, it wouldn't hurt anything to look around inside, too, as a precaution. Or do you want to be accused later of neglecting to try?" The question was addressed to Liz.

She shook her head. They went back along the path to the opposite side, where the pyramid entrance had been chiseled in the eighth century on the orders of one of the sons of the famous caliph Harun al-Rashid. The original entrance created during the pyramid's construction was a few floors up, but it was so well camouflaged that it was only discovered afterward.

"Hey!" Liz exclaimed suddenly. "What is that?"

She gestured frantically to the top of the pyramid, and immediately all of their eyes followed her outstretched arm.

The fog had cleared enough that one could just about see the top.

"What do you see up there?" Finnley asked, perplexed.

“I’m not sure…” Liz blinked and shrugged her shoulders in confusion. “I just thought I saw something, some faint light.”

She had not been mistaken. Now that she had said it, Indiana saw it too. A fine, bluish light danced around the pyramid, so weak that one could hardly perceive it.

Indiana wasn’t alarmed.

“Static electricity,” he said. “A kind of St. Elmo’s fire.

The wind carries dust and sand from the desert, and when it rubs against the stone, that creates the glow. It’s completely harmless.”

“Earlier, when the pyramid was still made of pure gold,”

Raymond said, grabbing the opportunity to share his expertise, “it would have been a highly visible beacon, allowing people to orient themselves. It’s believed that the pyramids were part of the same land survey…”

Indiana was only listening with half an ear. While the others had already turned and walked away, he was still staring upward. There was something else up there! He squinted his eyes, and he could see it a little more clearly, but just barely.

Up there, easily one hundred and forty feet high, one arm hung over the top edge of a stone. And as far as he could make out at the distance, it was one arm in a gray tweed suit!

Someone was up there — and Indiana was afraid he knew who.

“Wait for me here!” he shouted to the others, while he jumped on the pyramid’s bottom row of stones and hastily climbed up.

“Dr. Jones!” Finnley’s excited voice called after him.

“What are you doing?”

“Where you going?” Liz’s voice joined in. “What’s gotten into you?”

He looked back without pausing his climb.

“We’ll soon see,” he said. “Let’s hope that I’m mistaken.”

He pulled himself up, stone by stone. It was no easy matter, less like climbing stairs and more like climbing mountains. The carved blocks came up almost to Indiana’s chest, and he had to use both his hands and feet in order to move to the next ledge, which was sometimes only a foot wide, and from there he went on to the next one, over a hundred times. Yet over thousands of years, many of the blocks were badly weathered or damaged, breaking away as rubble again and again under his weight. To keep his footing, the climb

required his whole attention. In recent years there had been dozens of people who tried to climb to the top, only to fall to their deaths.

Little by little, Indiana worked his way up, without stopping for a breather. The closer he got to the top of the pyramid, the more apparent it became that he was not mistaken. There actually was an arm resting over one of the top stones, and now Indiana also saw that its fingers held a small, elongated object.

A statuette of Horus!

The knowledge that his eyes weren't deceiving him gave him new strength, and soon afterward he had climbed to the top the pyramid, which ended in a small plateau perhaps ten yards on a side. In ancient times, the actual cap-stone had extended into the sky almost same the distance further, covered in gold, but the stone had been robbed many centuries ago. The air crackled with static discharges, but they were completely harmless, causing nothing more than a slight tingling sensation on the skin. Indiana didn't even notice them.

At the edge of the plateau was Basil Smith, lying on his back with his arms extended, his sightless eyes turned toward heaven. Indiana took him by the shoulders and shook him.

"Basil! Get up!"

The motion shook the figure from his fingers and it clattered to the ledge below. The professor did not respond, however — and when Indiana put his finger on his jugular vein, he knew why.

Basil Smith was dead.

He showed no signs of wounds or injuries. As Liz had said, his face looked gaunt and hollow-cheeked, the part that was not hidden by his beard, but otherwise he appeared completely unharmed. He seemed to have died a peaceful death, and the expression on his face was as relaxed as if his greatest desire had been to be here at the tip of perhaps the most amazing structure in human history.

Indiana fell beside the motionless figure on the plateau, exhausted. He had no time to for the breathtaking view below, and instead joined Basil Smith in gently turning his eyes upward. Suddenly he felt a boundless void in himself.

He had been too late.

The promise he had made to the professor in Yucatan could not be fulfilled.

* * *

It was pouring rain two days later, when the funeral procession approached the excavated ridge at a measured pace.

Here in northern Egypt, it only rained this time of year every few years, but now the sky had opened its floodgates, as if to share in the sad occasion.

Indiana followed a few steps behind the pallbearers, just behind Liz and Raymond. He hardly noticed how the rain had soaked his hair and clothes, as he was much too preoccupied with his thoughts. They had turned to memories of the days when Basil Smith was in Washington, or when they were together on a research trip. Again and again, the scene flashed before him, when the professor had saved his life so selflessly.

The image of the motionless body that he had found at the top of the pyramid also came to mind. The medical autopsy of the corpse had shown that the death had occurred without any obvious external influences, and furthermore, no cause of death could be determined *at all*. So the death certificate eventually listed heart failure — the most likely possibility. Indiana was still not satisfied with the information. Had Basil Smith really suffered a heart attack at the summit of the pyramid? And if so, what was he doing up there? He wouldn't have put himself through the strains of the perilous ascent just to see the view. Or did he die somewhere else before dawn, only to be carried to the top afterward — and if so, how, why, and most importantly, by whom?

Questions that would probably never be answered, now that their search for the professor had come to such an abrupt end.

Since repatriation of the corpse to England was such an risky proposition due to the uncertain military situation, Basil's children had decided to bury their father in Egypt.

Because Egyptology had been particularly close to his heart in recent years, under these circumstances he would not have objected to the tidy little cemetery on the outskirts of Cairo as his final resting place — with nearly a direct view of the three pyramids, rising in the distance like little skewed blocks.

Even Sergeant Finnley made an appearance, to pay Basil Smith his last respects. His uniform was immaculate, as was everyone's at the occasion. Even Indiana had borrowed a black suit from the hotel for the day, and whoever saw him in it would never have suspected

him to be a globe-trotting adventurer. On the contrary, when separated from his beloved usual outfit, he turned into an av-erage, almost shy man, exuding about as much flair as an adventurous teller at the Bank of England. However, there weren't many mourners present. A few employees of the National Museum came after learning what a famous colleague was about to be buried here (although probably none of them knew that Smith was the same one who had broken into their workplace just a day earlier). Otherwise, just a few isolated people, there by chance and unfamiliar with the deceased, kept a respectful silence in the background as the procession past them by.

The pallbearers stopped before the open grave. The coffin was then slowly lowered into the depths. For a moment, Indiana was overcome by a feeling that something was wrong, but no sooner had it appeared than it was gone again.

A Coptic priest offered a short eulogy, meant to comfort just like many other such speeches spoken every day around the world. And then it was time to say goodbye with a shovelful of cemetery soil and a few flowers thrown on the grave, and one last look at the coffin of Basil Smith.

That was the moment when Liz could no longer restrain her tears, and Indiana moved toward her silently, put his arm around her shoulder, and held her quietly as she cried on his shoulder. What words could he say to drive away the tears?

When she had composed herself, they left the cemetery.

Behind them, the cemetery workers had already begun filling in the grave. Even for Indiana, it wasn't easy to keep the emotions under control. Nothing was more depressing than a funeral.

"A very nice funeral," Raymond said in a husky voice.

"Our father certainly would have wanted it that way."

It was meant to be comforting remark to Liz, but it wasn't clear if the young woman had even heard. Tears still ran down her cheeks, matching the pouring rain she was drenched in. Silent and depressed, they headed to the taxi waiting outside the gate to bring them back to the hotel.

Before they could enter, Finnley came up to them.

"Even if you might not care about it," he said, turning to Liz and Raymond, "I would still like to express my condolences to you. And what's more, I have something I wanted to give to you. We found it in

the inside pocket of your father's jacket, and I think you should have it."

From his uniform jacket, he produced a small booklet, which Raymond nearly tore from his hands.

"Father's notebook!" he cried excitedly, and immediately began to leaf through it. It was as if the funeral was forgotten at once. "He used to write down all his important thoughts in this. There must be an explanation as to what happened over the past few weeks."

"There are indeed some entries about it," confirmed Finnley, who to no one's surprise readily admitted to having read it.

Even Indiana felt curiosity suppress some of his grief.

Perhaps this book would shed some light on the mysterious circumstances of Smith's death, before he returned to the United States.

"And?" exclaimed Raymond. He stared at the Sergeant.

"Did he... the labyrinth...?" he stammered. "I mean, he must have...?"

Finnley took a deep breath and nodded.

"Yes," he said quietly, "he apparently did find the labyrinth.

And if we are to believe the book, he also succeeded in penetrating the subterranean chambers."

"And what else?" asked Raymond. "That can't be all!"

Finnley's gaze roamed to Indiana and Liz, as if he didn't know how to react.

"I'm not sure," he said uneasily. "I'm afraid this may be neither the time nor the place to discuss these things.

Let us therefore wait a little longer."

"Why?" Raymond protested. "We have a right to know on what..."

"Raymond!" Indiana admonished him. "Your father has been in his grave for just for a few minutes! Have a little consideration for your sister!"

Raymond lowered his head guiltily, but received an un-expected look from Liz.

"Raymond is absolutely right!" she exclaimed with surprising vehemence. "Why should we wait? Or maybe someone thinks our father would be alive if only we hadn't spent a few days doing nothing? No, I want to know exactly what happened in recent weeks." She clenched her fists in helpless rage. "And if there's someone responsible for his death, then..."

She left the rest of the sentence unsaid, her expression shockingly cold, her eyes leaving no doubt what she intended to do in this case.

"Well then," Finnley said. "I'll come to your hotel, and we can talk about everything there." He looked at his watch. "Let's say, in an hour."

* * *

"Unfortunately there is nothing in your father's records that would reveal the precise location of the labyrinth," said Finnley when they all finally sat together in the restaurant of the hotel CLEOPATRA. Each of them had used the interim to change into dry clothes. On this day they were just about the only guests, with a few exceptions. So it was no problem to find a quiet corner, allowing them them to converse undisturbed. "He gathered a caravan in which he and the soldiers drove west from Luxor into the desert.

After a few days they came to a secluded monastery, where they apparently learned the exact path to the labyrinth."

He opened his hands. "I've already made the appropriate inquiries, but none know anything about a monastery in the Egyptian Sahara."

Monastery, the word echoed in Indiana's skull as Finnley paused briefly, and in his mind's eye the image appeared of the shaven monks, dressed in orange robes. He shook his head, so rapidly that no one noticed it except him. Why should he waste any thoughts on them? In all probability he would never again deal with those monks.

Unless they showed up in Washington — because that was his next destination. As might be expected, he was eager to get back to the university, and he would return home with nothing but the sad news that Basil Smith was dead.

Perhaps now he would at least learn a little more about what had happened in the final weeks of the professor's disappearance. But Finnley's face betrayed the news notebook's contents had brought no further clarity.

"Anyway," continued the sergeant, "from the monastery, he continued on to the labyrinth. It is almost completely covered by the desert, and only the upper part of the pyramid adjoining the structure rises from the sand. There, Smith tracked down a hidden entrance, and after several attempts, succeeded in exploding it with

dynamite. From the pyramid, they advanced into the subterranean chambers. The records show that they met with several dead ends, but thanks to the plan of the floor mosaic from the Palace of Knossos, they found a safe way through. One of the soldiers was killed in an accident, but the details are not disclosed. Because the path through the maze was apparently too far for them to cover in one day, the men finally decided to spend the night in one of the chambers, planning to advance the next morning…" Finnley fell silent.

"And then?" Raymond asked impatiently. "What happened then?"

"I'm not sure if we'll ever know," replied Finnley. "The next pages of the notebook are missing. They were ripped out. It picks up again, though, with a passage that suggests Smith had advanced to the last room. But, it was locked, and resisted all attempts to open it by force."

The last chamber! Indiana thought. The room that supposedly housed the grave of the last god to roam the earth! The thought gave him goose pimples.

"Finally, one of the last entries reports why the professor would have wanted to steal the Horus statue," added Finnley. "He found a hieroglyphic inscription in the labyrinth indicating that the last chamber can only be opened with the aid of three particular statues of Horus, which must be inserted into three corresponding openings."

"And one of these statues was at the National Museum?"

asked Liz, her eyes still reflecting disbelief that her father would stoop to participating in something illegal.

"Quite so," said Finnley. "I have no idea how Smith researched the three statuettes, but somehow it seems Smith managed to locate their current whereabouts. Anyway, that's what the last entry in the notebook reports. One of them is the one from the National Museum, another is in an undiscovered grave chamber in the Valley of the Kings — Smith found out exactly where — and the third is in a museum in Khartoum."

"So what it means," Indiana said thoughtfully, "is that after he reached the labyrinth a few weeks ago, he came back to find the statues?"

"It seems so."

“But why would he spend all that time without contacting anyone?” Liz asked, desperately. “Surely with the army’s help, he could have gotten the three statuettes much faster!”

“That,” said Finnley with a deep sigh, “is undoubtedly one of the key questions.”

Indiana was considering several possible answers. Perhaps Basil Smith wanted to prevent whatever he believed to be in the last chamber from falling into the hands of the British Army — even though it was the armed forces of his own country. He remembered that the professor had mentioned once in Washington that he — like Indiana —

had a very ambivalent relationship with the military. Or perhaps Smith stayed underground because he had done something during the expedition for which he did not want to be held accountable. Neither option, however, cast the professor in a good light, and for that reason he kept them to himself.

“What about the soldiers who accompanied him?” Liz asked further. “They must have stopped somewhere. Why haven’t they returned?”

“It seems that they’ve found a common cause with your father. The presence of two soldiers at the burglary testify to that.” He cleared his throat and looked down.

“Or rather, they *had* found a common cause with him before he… well, you know.” He changed the subject, and his remarks seemed to slowly reach their conclusion. “Maybe you will be interested to know that yesterday I got in touch with the museum in Khartoum. And I found out that a statuette was stolen from there three weeks ago. And just like at the National Museum, no other pieces were taken.

Exactly the same scheme, with one curious difference in the report.”

“Then Basil was there before he came to Cairo?” asked Indiana.

Finnley cradled his head as if it were a difficult question.

“I don’t think he had anything to do with the burglary there,” he said. “But the description of the perpetrators sounds awfully strange. According to eyewitnesses, the culprits in Khartoum wore long orange robes. A total of three people. And they were all bald.” It sounded as if he didn’t find the account very credible.

“The monks!” exclaimed Raymond — while the same thought struck Indiana.

The monks! He had just now been worrying about them.

"What monks?" repeated Finnley, surprised. His inquiring gaze shifted to Indiana, whose brooding facial expression spoke volumes. "Is there perhaps something else, Dr. Jones, you've been meaning to tell me? It seems as if you know more about these..." He hesitated. "...These monks?"

"In fact, yes," Indiana said, "only I wasn't sure whether they had anything to do with Basil Smith or the labyrinth.

Now I have to think so, though." And then he told the sergeant the circumstances under which he had met them, and how both encounters nearly cost him his life.

"The monks have been to Bursa, Knossos and now Khartoum," Finnley summarized. "That can't be a coincidence."

"That's the conclusion I've come to," said Indiana, joy-lessly. He shrugged his shoulders. "But don't ask me what it all means."

"Hmm..." Finnley said thoughtfully. "Bald-headed monks, who appear again and again in places that are connected to the labyrinth. Starting about the time that Smith seems to have found it." He snapped his fingers. "That's it! Of course."

"What is it?"

"The monastery mentioned in the diary!" Finnley said.

"Where do monks usually live? Well?" He looked at them in turn. "In a *monastery*."

Indiana nodded. The sergeant was right.

"Only — what motive could the monks have for their actions?" he asked.

"Perhaps they are also trying to find the labyrinth,"

Raymond suggested.

"I don't think so," objected Finnley. "From the diary it seems likely that your father learned the exact location of the labyrinth from them."

"It only says that he learned it in the monastery," Raymond defended himself, evidently having paged through the notebook once or twice in the past hour. "It might be that he discovered inscriptions there that hadn't been deciphered before. And since then, the monks have been chasing after the same things he was."

"Then..." Liz stopped. "Then maybe they were the ones who killed my father!"

A moment of awkward silence.

“There is not the slightest evidence, Miss Smith, that your father was killed,” Finnley gently corrected her. “He seems to have died peacefully.”

She nodded her head in despair.

“I know, I know. But I can’t believe it. Sometimes…”

She swallowed. “Sometimes I even feel as if he were still alive. As if he had never died.” She fought tears again —

and lost.

Indiana handed her a handkerchief.

“Believe me, Liz,” he said softly. “It always feels that way, when you lose a loved one. It takes time for it to sink in.”

Time — that seemed to be the cue for Finnley. He looked at the clock and started to rise.

“Well, it’s my job to find out everything. Your part is done now. Nevertheless, you’ve helped me a lot. State secret or not — I’ll let you know when I’ve cleared up the matter. If I’m *able* to clear up the matter, that is.” He turned to Indiana. “Oh yes, Dr. Jones, one more thing.

How long will you remain in Cairo? There are one or two things that could yet benefit from your expert advice.”

“For the next day or so, you should be able to reach me here at the hotel,” Indy answered. “I still have to think about the best way to leave Egypt. I’d like to avoid the Mediterranean if at all possible.”

Basil’s children followed the last part of the conversation with increasing incredulity.

“You… you want to leave?” Raymond asked, stunned.

“But… where will you go?”

Indiana had to smile.

“The United States, of course,” he replied. He had grown fond of the two of them, but not so much that he had forgotten about everything else. “I’m already three weeks overdue. I have a lot of work to catch up on in Washington. And a bunch of students waiting for me.”

“But you can’t just abandon us!” Liz protested.

“I thought it clear from the get-go,” Indiana corrected her in a friendly tone. “I promised to help you find your father. I’ve done that. Now that he’s dead, there is no reason for us to continue on together.” He sighed. “Don’t get me wrong, it’s not that I don’t like you or even that I don’t want to help you figure things out, but I have

other responsibilities to attend to." Responsibilities! Grisswald would probably be very happy if he could hear him talk like this. "There's no reason we can't part on friendly terms."

"On friendly terms?" Liz could no longer understand the world.

"Yes, but…?" Raymond gasped for air. "What about the labyrinth? Aren't you interested in that at all anymore?"

Indiana almost felt like he was being subjected to a cross-examination, in which the two lawyers alternately barraged him with questions. But he had to admit that Basil's son had no doubt hit upon a sore spot.

So, the labyrinth. The greatest archaeological discovery in history! The grave of the last god! It was a unique opportunity. In this respect, two hearts beat in his chest.

Reason and curiosity. He had struggled during the last days over the decision to give reason the benefit.

"We should wait for less violent times to begin the search,"

he said. "The sergeant said a few days ago that the Germans could start a new offensive against Egypt any time.

And if we were to succeed, the labyrinth could fall into their hands. I dread to think what they would do with it. A couple of times I've been able to prevent such barbarism, but just barely." He shook his head as if to dispel these thoughts. "The labyrinth has remained undetected for two and a half millennia, so it can wait a few months or years longer. You are both still young. When the war's over, I'd be more than willing to take you with me on an expedition."

It all sounded very plausible and reasonable. He could hardly believe that these sentences came from his mouth.

A piece of his soul rebelled against every word. It was a piece that was susceptible to a certain type of fever, but Indiana didn't want to succumb to it this time around.

"That's not right!" Raymond disagreed. "Our father discovered the labyrinth. Along with the soldiers who accompanied him. We don't have time to wait. We have to find it and ensure that the credit goes to our father!"

"Leave him alone!" Liz said quietly. She had lowered her head in resignation. "He won't come. He already made his decision." She stretched her chin upwards, defiantly.

"But so what? We can do it without him. Together with the sergeant, we'll find the labyrinth."

Finnley smiled indulgently, as he found this option hardly worth his consideration.

"Didn't you say quite clearly just a few days ago that you weren't interested in further collaboration?" he recalled.

"Sure," she admitted sheepishly, then dismissed it immediately. "But since then the situation has changed dramatically!"

"If I remember correctly," he replied, as if he had been waiting for this specific objection, "you said exactly the same thing then."

"Yes, but now it's…"

"I'm sorry," Finnley interrupted her, "I see no way to reach an agreement. When I work with someone, I must be able to rely on them. It would be ill-advised to burden myself with two civilians who change their minds on a whim every few days. Another issue is that primarily I am interested in the disappearance of the soldiers, and not the location of the labyrinth. If I were to discover it in the course of the investigation, however…" He left the rest of the sentence unsaid. He also could not be any clearer.

They understood exactly what he meant: In this case, the credit would go to the British Army.

From Finnley's perspective, it was only fair. For Basil's children, it sounded harsh. For Indiana, it seemed over-dramatic. He didn't believe that, in the event of such a discovery, the sergeant would simply sweep the professor's contribution entirely under the rug.

Raymond made a bewildered face, and Liz seemed ready to throw her bare hands around Finnley's neck.

"You… you…" she gasped, seemingly having trouble finding a suitable epithet.

"Of course, I can't prevent you from going to look for it at your own risk," added Finnley. "But I would strongly advise against it. Life in the desert is rough, and I don't think you would cope very well out there." He looked at Indiana, who thought he saw something like amusement in the sergeant's eyes — and his next words showed that his instincts had not deceived him. Finnley made a vague gesture. "It would be something else entirely, of course, if Dr. Jones agreed to continue to collaborate with us. Then I probably couldn't help but accept that our agreement to cooperate was still valid."

Indiana cast Finnley an angry glance. That was the last straw! The sergeant had put the ball back in his court.

And that seemed to amuse him even more. But he wasn't going to fall for it.

"If you think," he said smiling, "you can get me to come around with this cheap stunt, then you…"

"But why not?" said Raymond, already proving the effectiveness of the cheap stunt. "What do you stand to lose if you stay a few days longer? And what do you stand to gain if you find the labyrinth with us?" he said almost pleadingly.

"You hear that!" Liz joined in — despite the fact that she had just a few moments earlier claimed that they could cope without Indiana. "Everything depends solely on you."

He opened his mouth to repeat what he had said earlier, but Liz cut him off.

"And if you couldn't even follow through on the promise that you gave to our father, after he saved your life," she said, "then you can at least ensure that he gets the credit for this find! That would be the least you could do for him!"

He turned his head abruptly toward her. That was a low blow, and she knew it!

But at the same time, her womanly instinct seemed to have struck a nerve. And — he thought — wasn't she right? Was it not, in fact, the *least* he could do for Basil?

More than that, wouldn't the professor have *expected* it of him, under these circumstances?

They could see him wrestling with his decision. Silently they waited for him to choose, and he felt like the curious piece of his soul had the upper hand. And in the end, reason had no other choice but to surrender unconditionally

— as it had so often before.

"Okay," he said with a deep sigh. "I'll send a telegram to my university, saying that they'll have to do without me a few days more."

Liz wrapped herself around his neck, no sooner than he had uttered the last words.

"Dr. Jones, you are a treasure! Truly!"

He struggled to defend himself against her expression of gratitude, and Liz moved back to her chair. He was fully aware how reliable such utterances were coming from her mouth. Nothing and

no one would stop her from once again calling him the greatest villain in history, at the first opportunity.

"I'm glad you're back on board, Dr. Jones," said Finnley.

"Do look so innocent, Sergeant!" answered Indiana in mostly mock anger. "You wanted nothing else this whole time."

He smiled enigmatically.

"Well, because I hold you in such high regard, I won't contradict you." He looked at his watch. "I'm afraid I'm out of time. We'll talk through everything later. Right now I have an appointment at the National Museum."

"Another burglary?" asked Indiana.

"No, not this time. I want to discuss with the director the possibility of providing me the real statue on loan.

Who knows what use we can find for it once we reach the labyrinth."

"But even then, we'll be missing two," remarked Liz.

"Right," said Finnley. "And one of the two is what we'll take care of next. We have to go to Luxor anyway."

"And the third?"

"We'll see." Finnley shrugged. "An old adage says, he who wants to pave his way, must only place one stone after another."

"I didn't know that you were a fan of old sayings," said Indiana.

"I'm not. But they do come in handy when you can't think of anything better to say."

He stood up, and Indiana rose too.

"I will accompany you, Sergeant. While you talk to the director, I'd like to have a few words with the curator."

And in response to Finnley's questioning look, he added,

"I also want to leave the Herodotus scrolls at the museum for safekeeping."

"You don't want to keep your hands on the original manuscripts?"

"They'll be safer in the museum." He looked at Finnley with a mischievous smile. "And anyway, Sergeant, it's not like we both don't have our own copies — you and I."

Finnley's smile was answer enough.

5

Luxor, Egypt
June 7, 1941

"Believe me, sir, I know all of these passages like the back of my hand," said the Egyptian who led them further down into the mountain. "Down there, there is nothing more.

This is a dead end."

The tunnel was so narrow and low that as they continued single file, they had to crouch deeply to avoid bumping their heads. The flickering light of the torch that the leader held in his hand illuminated just the next few yards. Restless shadows danced on the walls. In some places the path seemed like a natural cave, but in others stone steps and reliefs on the walls demonstrated that it had been created by human hands. Their footsteps echoed against the hollow rock.

It was one of dozens of deep passages carved in stone here in the Valley of the Kings, some hundreds of yards long. Some of them — like this one — were narrow, twisted and not particularly impressive, while others were stunning constructions with sophisticated gear systems, magnificent halls, hidden traps, and secret chambers. But even these precautions could not protect the more than sixty known crypts from discovery. Many of them had already been plundered in

ancient times. After all, it had been well-known since antiquity that this valley hid royal tombs, including the final resting places of the pharaohs Ramses, Thutmose, Amenhotep and Tut-ankh-Amun. Their immense burial treasures had in the past attracted thousands of looters, researchers, and grave robbers — often combined in one person. Many mummies, whose remains when crushed into dust were regarded during the Middle Ages as a miracle cure, originated from this valley.

It was only a few minutes drive from Luxor, the tiny, charming village just over four hundred miles south of Cairo on the eastern bank of the Nile, and its trees, clean-liness, and brightly painted houses were more reminiscent of a provincial capital in southern France than a Middle Eastern town.

A trip by boat up the river from Cairo would have taken several days to complete. Thanks to Finnley they made the journey in a small seaplane — heaven only knew where the sergeant had found it — and landed on the Nile just a few hours after take off. Even Raymond was slowly becoming accustomed to the frequent flying: He had survived the period in the air relatively unscathed, using only two barf bags.

During their descent, they had had a magnificent view of the Necropolis of Thebes, which stood on the bank of the Nile directly across from Luxor, on the edge of a lush, green plain perhaps two miles across. Colossal stone temples, giant statues and huge pillars still stood as evidence of the former importance of this place, which four thousand years ago was the capital of the entire Egyptian empire and regarded as one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It was right at the foot of a craggy ridge, behind which began the endless desert, home to the Valley of the Kings, with its many burial chambers.

Some of the passageways were open to the public, but the one in which they now found themselves was not.

Usually, it was locked up with a sturdy grate. Not because it led to treasures that needed protection from looters, but because tourists venturing into the tunnel could cause significant damage or even hurt themselves. Given a couple of hours, it wasn't hard for Finnley to find the man charged with oversight of the area. He was a tanned Egyptian named Suleiman, who was a bit smaller than Raymond, but unequally stout. For fifteen years, he had been responsible for the maintenance of the burial grounds, and consequently, he knew it like

the back of his hand. When he heard their intentions, he did not hesitate to personally drive them to the Valley of the Kings and to lead in the investigation. As they entered, he noted that the lock had been broken and the barrier knocked down. According to him, it happened every few months because some diehards refused to believe the burial treasures had been completely looted long ago.

"Even our efforts are totally in vain," continued Suleiman.

"I told you that this tunnel is a dead end."

"That's what we heard in Luxor," Finnley said sullenly, following close behind the Egyptian.

"And rightly so. If there were a side passage down here, it would have been found by researchers decades ago. Or by grave robbers in the millennia before that."

"We'll see." Finnley sighed. "How much farther is it to end?"

"Perhaps half of the tunnel is behind us," Suleiman said unenthusiastically, pushing further into the hole with a groan. As much as his short stature worked to his advantage, his immense girth worked against it.

They worked their way slowly into the mountain. At one point the ceiling was so low that they had to crawl on their hands and feet, but then fortunately the passage expanded enough to allow everyone to stand up straight, except Indiana and Finnley, who were the tallest.

"It's just as Smith wrote in the notebook," the sergeant recalled. "There should be a fork somewhere, shortly after this point."

Suleiman let loose an amused, but polite laughter.

"Whatever this man has recorded in his notebook, he could never, ever…"

They didn't find out what the professor could never do, because their leader stopped in mid-sentence and stood rooted to the spot.

"But… by all the gods…" he stammered, "this cannot be…"

Liz, close behind Indiana, who also remained motionless, peered anxiously over his shoulder as if into the depths of the Ganges, almost expecting a monster to devour them whole.

"What is it?" she whispered anxiously, as she got a shove from behind. Raymond, the last in the group, had caught up to them and almost knocked them over.

"Is there something there?" he asked innocently.

"Hush!" Liz said angrily.

Silence spread. Their leader held the torch in an outstretched arm in front of him, and the circle of light shone on boulders and other debris a few feet away, in front of a crack in the right wall, just large enough for a man to get through with a little effort.

This discovery seemed to upset Suleiman terribly.

“Believe me, I was down here just two months ago,” he said. “Really! There was no hole here. It… it… it is like nothing that has ever happened before. Believe me! I… I do not know how…”

Indiana pushed past Finnley and took the torch from the stuttering Egyptian’s hand. Suleiman wouldn’t let go at first, but Finnley reassured him:

“Let him! He’s the right man for the job.”

Indiana went up to the opening. It was not natural.

The crack had been carved into the rock by brute force; just inside he could see a couple of chisels and a pickaxe that had been left behind. It could not have been an easy task in the narrow passage. The unknown workers seemed to have known exactly where they needed to strike. On the wall to the right and left, there were no markings that would indicate other, futile attempts.

He held the torch into the opening and saw that the crack led to a small corridor that after a few yards made a sharp turn to the left. The ground was covered with a fine layer of dust, showing footprints that lead in both directions.

Indiana ran his eyes along the walls, looking for any evidence that would point to hidden traps — tiny holes in the smoothly carved sides or ceiling, protruding slabs from the floor, or anything similar. It appeared the builders had left behind no deadly legacy. At least none that he could see.

“Wait for me here,” he said, addressing the others, then he slipped through the opening.

The air inside was more stale and musty compared to outside in the tunnel. Indiana felt as though he was inhal-ing previous millennia with each breath.

Slowly, Indiana put one foot in front of the other, approaching the bend.

Beyond this was a narrow, rectangular chamber, carefully carved from the rock and completely empty — except for a stone tablet of hieroglyphics, placed at eye level on one of the walls. Indiana

instantly recognized the repeated hawk symbols — the mark of Horus.

Just below was a small vertical recess in the rock, perhaps a few inches deep and just as wide, barely half a yard tall and tapering toward the top, Gothic-like. It gave the impression of having been created to accommodate an elongated, slender object, and it did not take much imagination to picture a counterpart to the Horus statuette from the National Museum fitting there perfectly.

But if ever there was one there — it was nowhere to be seen.

The recess was empty.

Indiana entered the chamber, still cautious. Once he was absolutely sure that no unpleasant surprise awaited them, he signaled the others to follow. On Finnley's request, Suleiman waited back outside in the hallway, partly so they could talk undisturbed, partly because one of the simplest principles of archaeology was to never venture into a closed chamber without leaving a lookout behind.

The Egyptian would have plenty of opportunity for a thorough inspection later.

"So we're too late," said the sergeant, after he had grasped the situation.

"Yes," commented Raymond. "Again."

"What brilliant analysis!" Liz scoffed. "Honestly — I could have told you that out there in the hallway."

"Since you apparently know so much," said Raymond,

"maybe you can tell us who snatched the statue away from here. For someone who's done nothing but stand in the corner, it should be quite clear."

"How should I know?" she replied defiantly. "Normally you're the clever fox in our family!"

"No need to fight," Finnley stepped in to mediate. "The figure could have been stolen by virtually anyone."

"No," said Indiana. "It must have been someone who knew exactly where to break through. There are no marks on the wall indicating other attempts. Thus, it was someone involved in this story pretty deeply."

"Right," agreed Finnley, throwing Indiana an approving glance. "And do you have a guess who might be behind it?"

He replied with a shrug. There were several possibilities, and they were all accompanied by a large question mark: perhaps the monks, perhaps the soldiers who had accompanied Smith, or perhaps even the professor himself. Or maybe someone as yet completely unknown.

While the others speculated further about possible perpetrators, he devoted his attention to the hieroglyphs on the stone tablet above the recess. He was no expert in this field, but he knew the significance of the main characters. A hundred fifty years earlier, there had been no man on earth who could decipher them. Despite all the attempts through the centuries to decrypt them, they always remained a book with seven seals. It was only during Napoleon's African campaign, when his soldiers discovered a large, ancient stone tablet, inscribed with text in three different languages — hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek. After this discovery, one of the great moments of archaeology, it took only a few months to crack the code of Egyptian hieroglyphics. Today, any Egyptologist could read it almost as easily as a newspaper in his native language.

Indiana saw a hawk engraved on the stone tablet several times, and beside it a few characters that together spelled out something like "the birth of Horus," or "the *re* birth of Horus." The reincarnation of the last god to roam the earth popped into his mind, and he felt as if two more puzzle pieces had been pasted into the picture. But another hieroglyph caused him some headaches.

It was a baboon-like creature, depicted in a squatting position, and in its outstretched front paws were two long, slender knives, looking almost like machetes. It was, as he knew, the Egyptian hieroglyph for "danger," and that the fact that there was not just one, but dozens of such symbols, framing entire panel, set off his inner alarm system. Apparently the inscription warned that the recess was occupied by something that the person who attached the stone tablet considered extremely dangerous.

"Did you find something?" he heard Liz's questioning voice, and when he emerged from his thoughts and looked around, he realized that they were all staring at him spell-bound.

He briefly told them what he believed to have deciphered. After unsuccessfully searching his pockets, he asked for a pen and paper. After Raymond helpfully provided them, he set about copying the

hieroglyphs. Maybe in Luxor they could find an Egyptologist who could translate the inscription precisely.

Once he had finished, they shuffled out of the chamber, where Suleiman was outside fidgeting because he also wanted to take a look. Indiana was the last one through the opening and suddenly stopped mid-step, as if electrified.

"Sergeant!" he cried. "Come over here with the torch!"

In the narrow passage, it took a few seconds for Finnley to push past the others and approach the opening. In the glow of the torch, Indiana realized that he was not mistaken.

"What is it?" asked Finnley. "Did you find something?"

Indiana plucked a couple of tiny fabric threads from a sharp edge on the side of the crack and held them up to Finnley between his thumb and forefinger.

"Cloth fibers," stated Finnley.

Indiana nodded.

"That's right. Cloth fibers. Coarse and rough." He looked at Finnley seriously. "And most importantly —

they're *orange*!"

The glint in Finnley's eyes showed that he understood.

"The monks!" Liz gasped. "They stole the statue!"

Indiana turned to her and nodded again.

This discovery could mean nothing else.

That was it! Two more pieces.

But it still wasn't the complete picture.

6

The Monastery
June 12, 1941

Indiana had pictured the monastery completely differently. Together with Finnley, Liz and Raymond, he lay prone on the crest of a sand dune and looked over to the rock that loomed high in the distance, several hundred yards through the dust of the desert. The binoculars that Finnley had procured revealed that there were many windows carved into the rock, on several levels, but all about equal in size. At the foot of the cliff was a watchtower built from fired clay bricks, near a powerful, wooden gate. Just off to the side, a second building was visible. This could have been stables, where horses and camels were kept.

"Now what?" asked Raymond, passing the binoculars to Liz. "What do we do now?"

They had just concluded a five-day journey that had been truly exhausting, a five-day journey through an endless sea of sand, through blistering heat in the day, freezing cold at night, and having to make the trip with two pests like Liz and Raymond in tow didn't help. But other than all the saucy and scornful bickering, the two of them had made the most of it. Such a trip was not for everyone, and unlike them, Indiana was accustomed to such hardships.

Neither of them had complained about the grueling conditions, and when there had been disputes, it was mostly over trivial little things. Liz had calmed down somewhat and shown remarkable tenacity in recent days, causing Indiana to wonder if the her resolute determination to understand her father's death could explain the change. Or was she just trying to put the loss behind her? Probably both. Amazingly, Raymond had also undergone a transformation that could not be ignored, and was — at least by his standards — surprisingly persistent and determined.

Sometimes, such a grim expression appeared on his face, that Indiana suspected he had the same fever that burned in him. Perhaps Raymond had been infected by his father, and only now, when he was in his grave, did it manifest.

From Luxor they had followed the caravan route that Basil Smith described in his notebook. Nevertheless, they would have missed the monastery entirely, if they hadn't happened upon a caravan whose leaders were persuaded by a generous bribe to point them in the right direction. It was pure luck — nothing more — that they had achieved their goal at all. Two other related caravans had crossed their path, and both knew that there should be monastery somewhere nearby, but neither knew the exact location. However, they did say something about what faith the monks belonged to. They had been told of rumors suggesting that they were a kind of ancient Egyptian brotherhood, living in strict seclusion.

Such strict seclusion, Indiana thought grimly, that the monks had appeared throughout the eastern Mediterranean, from Khartoum to Bursa, just in the past few weeks.

Something was obviously wrong here!

"*We* don't do anything," Indiana said, sliding backward down from the crest of the dune. "*I* will do something!"

As he shook the sand from his clothes, the others also climbed down from the sand dune.

"And just *what* are you going to do?" asked Liz. "Are you going to walk up to their front gate and ask for directions to the labyrinth? And then, of course, ask them kindly to give you the other two statues?"

Indiana gave her a friendly nod.

"Yeah. I had something like that in mind. Except I'm gonna drive, not walk. They wouldn't believe that I walked all the way here on

foot."

"You don't take me seriously!"

"Yes, I do," he assured her quickly. "But honestly, I don't know what I'll do next. I hardly ever do."

He went to one of the two Land Rovers, in the colors of the British Army, parked behind a large rock. At the request of Liz and Raymond, Finnley had forgone the company of other soldiers. It was just the four of them on the road. They took two vehicles in order carry more supplies

— primarily gasoline and water — and because if one of the Land Rovers broke down, they'd still have the second.

Indiana opened the rear cargo door.

"I'll leave some of the supplies here," he said as he pulled out a canister. "In the event that something happens to me. Help me unload."

"What should we do if you don't come back?" Liz asked anxiously.

"Well, if I'm not back by the break of dawn, then…"

He shrugged and pointed to Finnley. "Then he'll think of something."

"I'm honored by your trust in me," said Finnley. "Are you certain you want to give it?"

Indiana pondered the question briefly and then, coming up with no suitable response, settled for a brief smile.

Since their first meeting, Finnley had proven himself to be extremely reliable, and that impression had been reinforced in recent days. Between them an understanding had developed, one which could be expressed without many words: every man does what has to be done. That's why Finnley didn't object when Indiana took the initiative without asking, even though he was officially the one in charge.

After they had removed a large part of their supplies, Indiana sat behind the wheel of the Land Rover, started it up, and went on his way. He drove the Land Rover back to the dusty road that wound through the sand dunes and rocks on its way to the monastery. Earlier, they had stopped just short enough to avoid getting caught within the view of the monastery. Now nobody could miss him, as the vehicle kicked up a plume of dust on its approached.

Indiana removed his hat and wiped the sweat from his brow. Inside the car, the scorching heat was even more unbearable than it

was outside, and the wind that came in through the open windows provided only minimal relief.

He reached the big gate. To his surprise, nothing in the monastery had moved even slightly in the meantime. No one had come out to meet him, and no one had appeared in the windows to see who it was that approached. The building lay deserted. Indiana knew that this impression couldn't be right. Instinctively he felt that there was life behind those walls.

He stopped the car a few yards outside the gate, sounding the horn several times. No one responded.

Perhaps the monks were not just bald, but also deaf.

That would explain why, in their previous two encounters, none of them spoke.

He shook his head. Nonsense! It must be the heat, allowing such thoughts to arise. He turned off the engine and slowly climbed out of the car. Now that the engine was no longer running, the silence was unnatural. Somehow it made him nervous.

"Hello!" he cried, and when nobody answered, he tried again a little louder: "Is anyone there? Can anybody hear me?"

Silence.

He stepped up to the wooden gate and knocked against it with his fist.

"Hello! Answer me!"

He jumped up in alarm when suddenly he heard a voice, muffled by the wood. It shouted something in a language or dialect that was entirely unknown to him. Nevertheless, he felt satisfaction. He was not mistaken. The monastery was inhabited.

"I'm afraid I don't understand you!" he called back. "I am a traveler, looking for accommodations." He couldn't come up with anything better in the moment, but he doubted that the man behind the gate understood him anyway. "Why don't you just come out here and let me in? Surely we can can come to some sort of arrangement…"

He avoided an involuntary step backward, when a small panel in the gate, which he hadn't even noticed, opened directly in front of his nose. The sullen face of a bald-headed monk met his gaze, staring back at him with piercing eyes.

Again the man blurted out something unintelligible that sounded half threatening, half questioning.

Indiana stretched out his arms and smiled apologetically.

"I'm sorry, as I said, I unfortunately can't…"

With a bang the door shut again, before he had finished the sentence, and immediately afterward he heard shuffling steps, growing more remote.

"…can't understand you," he finished the sentence. This couldn't be right! He stepped forward and slammed his fist against the wood. "Hey! You can't just leave me like that!

What about that famous Arab hospitality?"

There was no answer, and he had not expected this.

He sent a pleading look in the direction from which he had come, where Finnley, Liz and Raymond now certainly lay on one of the dunes, watching him through binoculars.

Now what? Nobody had to tell him that his presence was not wanted, clearly.

Indiana scratched the stubble on the chin, as he recalled to mind the face of the monk who had just appeared behind the small panel. Hadn't he seen him before? That could only be true, however, if the man had been one of the monks who had set the library in Bursa on fire a few weeks ago.

He sighed and shrugged his shoulders. Probably, he was imagining things. All those ugly bald heads looked the same. In addition, the man had shown no sign of recognition, at least not in the two or three seconds in which they were face-to-face.

He was about to return to the Land Rover, when once again he heard the shuffling of footsteps behind the door.

Shortly afterward, the panel opened once more. Once again a bald-headed monk appeared behind it, but this time it was a much older man who exuded a certain dignity. Indiana saw through the opening that a few golden threads were woven into the collar of his orange robe. Presumably a badge indicating a high position in the order.

"What do you want?" the man asked in surprisingly good English. He didn't seem particularly interested, but his face was neither angry nor disgusted. Indiana decided to take it as a good sign.

"I'm a traveler," he said, regretting that he hadn't used the past few seconds to come up with a plausible story. He tried to compensate for this deficiency with a broad, engaging smile. "It's a pure accident that I found myself here, and when I saw this porch

and the windows, I thought that maybe I could spend a night with a solid roof over my head."

The monk's expression revealed nothing of what he was thinking. His clear gaze was fixed on Indiana, as if he was expecting him to say more.

"I... wouldn't want you to be inconvenienced for nothing, of course," Indy added. "I can pay, naturally."

"Where did you sleep last night, American?" asked the monk with a straight face.

Indiana glanced over at the Land Rover, but before he could begin to complain that it could hardly be called a proper roof over his head, the monk said:

"Then you're going to have to be content there again tonight. We do not accept visitors here. And we would appreciate it if you could retreat a few miles from this place before you set up your camp."

It wasn't rude, but it was final. Indiana saw that he was not making any progress. He had to think of something else.

"Uh, what kind of club is this, anyway?" he asked in a conversational tone, stalling for time and trying his big smile again. "Is it a religious thing, or some sort of frater-nity?"

"I wish you a pleasant journey," said the monk, and began to close the panel.

"Stop, stop!" Indiana called quickly. "Wait a minute!"

"What do you want?"

"I... uh... I..." All his thoughts were buzzing around in his head, and he grabbed the first available. "I still have a problem. My water is low. Unfortunately, I've had some

— uh — bad luck. If you don't want me to stay, at least let me replenish my water reserves. Then I'll disappear again, immediately. Or..." He paused, as if the idea frightened him. "Or would you deny me even that?"

The monk thought.

"Very well," he said. "I cannot refuse you this."

Indiana already felt an oncoming sense of triumph. Well, he would at least get a chance to take a quick look at the inside of the monastery. Before the triumph totally overwhelmed him, though, the monk added: "Wait here."

Then the panel closed again, and Indiana had to admit that he had perhaps been a bit hasty to declare victory.

Either this order subscribed to the strictest seclusion from the world, or behind these walls there was something very valuable. Indiana was betting on the latter.

For a while he stood there as ordered, and then the panel opened once more, and the monk handed him a water-filled jug through the opening.

"That's probably enough for the next few days," he said.

"Fill your canteens and leave the pitcher outside the gate."

Without another word, he closed the panel and left Indiana standing outside.

"Thanks, how very friendly of you," Indiana murmured, feeling very stupid. To keep up appearances, he poured the water from the pitcher into an empty canister he was sure he could identify later. Since he had no way to test it, he had to be careful not to drink a sip of it. He trusted that these monks were malicious enough to poison the water.

They had already tried to kill him twice — why not a third time?

Defeated, he headed back. Before he turned down the road to the rocks where the second Land Rover was waiting, he made sure that he was out of sight of the monastery.

The others were right where he left them.

"Seems like we've hit a snag," he said after he had parked the car.

"We saw, through the binoculars," Finnley said. "These fellows are really quite shy."

"Well, it was worth a shot," said Indy.

Raymond wasn't ready to give up yet.

"But we *must* get inside that monastery!" he ranted to himself. He looked to Indiana, as if demanding immediate action. Behind his thick glasses, unnaturally large eyes were glaring. He pointed fiercely in the direction of the monastery. "Only there can we find out the location of the labyrinth. And only there can can we find the other two statues!"

Indiana placed a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

"Take it easy, Raymond," he said. "No one's saying that we should throw in the towel. We still have other options."

"How immensely reassuring," Liz groaned with undisguised skepticism. "And just what is it you suggest we do next?"

The corners of his mouth curled into a smile.

"It's very simple. Plan B."

“Plan B?”
“Exactly.” He squinted at a sand dune behind the monastery.
“But we have to wait until it’s dark.”

* * *

Indiana’s outstretched arms were just able to reach the lower edge of the window ledge carved into the rock directly above the stone porch with the big door. With extreme effort, he pulled himself up onto the roof from the ledge and from there dropped almost silently into the chamber behind it. He landed on his feet and paused in a squat for several seconds, waiting with bated breath for discovery or attack, while his eyes nervously attempted to penetrate the darkness. It was a plain, bare room, whose only piece of furniture was a lounging area carved from rock out of one of the side walls.

Most importantly, however — there was nobody in the room!

Indiana dared to breathe again. Apparently he had acted correctly when he chose this path, rejecting the others. If there really were stables, the animals may have sounded the alarm as soon as he had come near. And it seemed to him to be just as good a decision to come once again alone down the road, after dark, and after the lights from the windows of the monastery had been largely extinguished.

Liz seemed ill-suited for such action; Raymond would have taken the first opportunity to wake up the whole monastery; and Finnley, whom he would have credited as the only one capable of accompanying him, was probably better off keeping an eye on the other two. Perhaps he would yet have a supporting role to play.

Indiana approached the doorway, outlined by faint light from distant torches. On the other side, a slightly twisted hallway stretched out to both the left and the right. As he peered out cautiously, not a soul was visible. So he ventured out, trusting his instinct to choose a direction.

The passage led past other chambers that matched the one he had entered through down to the last detail. There were no doors anywhere. A loud, regular snore came from the next room. As he crept gently over to the doorway, he saw that behind it lay a sleeping, bald-headed monk, lying on the stone surface and covered only by a simple linen cloth, which he had pulled up under his chin. It looked exactly like the other chamber. This was obviously the monks’

sleeping quarters. And he had been fortunate enough to have selected, at random, one of the few unin-habited rooms.

But whether it had been luck or intuition or experience

— now was not the time to philosophize about it. Indiana had to focus on moving as quietly as possible. Even though the temperature had by now declined considerably, a stubborn film of sweat stayed on his forehead. And the thought that the slightest noise could betray him, that a single monk could sound the alarm and awaken all of his colleagues, caused further beads of sweat to appear. Even the involuntary grip around the handle of the pistol in his holster on his hip wasn't able to provide much reassurance.

He could only use the weapon as a last resort, in an emergency. A single shot would have the entire monastery at his throat within seconds.

Soon he reached a junction where a side tunnel had been carved in the rock, and after he assured himself that the coast was clear, he followed it. Along the way, he noted how artfully and precisely the rock had been hollowed out.

It was a job that required enormous skill. The technique seemed to come from the same ancient time in which the ancient Egyptian tombs and temples had been built. This impression was reinforced when the hallway finally ended at a mighty, domed gallery, deep inside the mountain.

Gently, he ducked behind a railing and dared a glance over it. He was on the uppermost level of three balconies, stacked in the round. They were carved into the stone with remarkable consistency, framing the huge dome-shaped hall. Each balcony was supported by ornate pillars.

Even here there was silence. No one would see what he was up to.

For what he beheld electrified him. Far below was a slightly raised platform in the center of the cathedral, on which there was rested an elongate cube of polished, black stone, a yard tall. It looked like an altar. It was not the cube itself that excited Indiana, but the stylized representation of a man with a falcon's head, whose image was carved in the polished surface. And further, there were two elongated statues of Horus standing in small depressions to the left and right of the falcon's head! The third depression, however, directly above the head of Horus, was empty.

No wonder, Indiana thought, when the corresponding statuette was in Finnley's safe hands outside.

He slipped along the railing until he came across a staircase that led to the floor below, and quietly crept down the stone steps to where it joined with another set of stairs.

His face showed a hint of optimism. With a little luck he would be able to grab the statuettes and leave the monastery before any of the monks saw him. Unfortunately, the two figures were only part of the problem. It would do them no good to have all three pieces if they didn't know where the labyrinth was.

And the answer was out there in the monastery, somewhere.

If he couldn't find it in an inscription or some sort of parchment — both highly unlikely, since he would hardly have the time for an exhaustive search — he'd have no other choice but to convince one of the monks to tell him the location of the labyrinth. He had no illusions that this would be anything less than the hardest part of his mission. He thought of the monk with whom he had spoken through the small door at the gate earlier that day. He had mastered the English language, and he also seemed to occupy a high position. If so, he would probably also know about the labyrinth. On the other hand, Indiana wasn't sure it would be easy to get him to talk. If he wasn't forthcoming, Indiana might have to abduct him from the monastery in order to "persuade" him.

Of course he didn't cherish the idea of kidnapping anyone, but since these monks had nearly succeeded in killing him, twice, he figured they deserved it. He wouldn't hurt the monk. Once they knew what they wanted to know, he would let him free.

Indiana hurried down the last segment of the elegant staircase to the ground floor passage that lead straight into the cathedral. But as soon as he came around the bend, Indiana confronted a figure in an orange robe and jumped back, frightened.

Damn, he cursed silently. That was the last thing he needed! They had left a guard. After finding all the other corridors deserted, he hadn't expected one to be here.

The monk was turned with his back toward the entryway, and Indiana was staring at his bald head. That was the only reason Indiana remained undetected.

Carefully, so as not to attract the monk's attention, he pushed himself back up the stairs, until he disappeared out of sight of the

man.

He returned to the floor above and tried another flight of steps, one that diverged somewhat from the main hall, but one he suspected lead to a passage that approached it from the other side. Indiana gritted his teeth. Even if the guy down there was not very attentive — he would never go unnoticed. Regardless of which side he approached from, the monk would have plenty of time to warn everyone in the building.

He ascended again to the balcony, looking down longingly at the box with the statuettes, perhaps ten yards away from him. At the moment, though, that was at least nine yards too much.

Indiana forced his thoughts in another direction. At the moment he was standing right above the first-floor entrance. The monk was still leaning against the wall, just beneath his feet, with only the balcony floor separating them. The torches, attached to brackets on the wall, cast his shape as a vague, elongated shadow on the floor of the great hall.

He frowned thoughtfully. Wait a minute! The guy down there was certainly not expecting anybody to come from *inside* the hall itself. If he could drop in behind him, and approach him *from the interior*, perhaps he could go unnoticed long enough to discretely take him out. Descending into the cathedral presented no special problem for Indiana.

He wasted no time undertaking the risky endeavor, removing the whip from his belt and wrapping the end around one of the pillars supporting the balcony above. He knot-ted the leather lash and verified it could withstand his weight by tugging on it powerfully. He peered down questioningly one last time, then climbed on the railing, uttered a quick a prayer toward heaven and began to descend.

The prayer came back to him immediately with the words “refused by addressee.” His right foot, which was propping him against the column, slipped on the smooth surface. He bounced off the stone before flopping down like a wet sack. Under the increased load, the tension in the whip increased, and it rubbed audibly against the edge of the railing.

There was a crack, that seemed to Indy as loud as a whip, echoing clearly throughout the chamber. His heart pounding and cursing his misfortune, he stared down at his feet to see that he had caught himself just a few inches below the balcony floor.

Indiana heard a questioning exclamation in a foreign language from the passage, followed by bold steps approaching, and he saw the shadow on the ground getting closer to him. In a moment, the monk had come to the main floor of the hall. Then the shadow stayed still.

Again, a questioning word was heard, and Indiana had a mental picture of the man, less than three yards below, waiting for a reply. Even if he let the matter rest for now, his attention had been aroused. That would make it difficult to sneak up on him.

It was time to take some unorthodox measures.

As he braced himself with one hand on the whip, he reached to the handle with his other hand and took a moment to size up the situation. The whip was long enough to swing him under the balcony, and if he was lucky, he'd be able to knock the wind out of the guy before he could say "peep."

Indiana took a deep breath. Once more he tried to assess, on the basis of the shadow on the ground, the exact location of the man, then he pushed himself resolutely with both feet and swung down, clutching the handle of the whip with both hands raised above his head.

Everything worked perfectly, just as he envisioned it, without a single hitch — except for the pillar that stood at the entrance.

He saw the collision rushing toward him — or rather, he toward it — but it was already too late. Before he could even say "peep," the full length of his body cracked against the pillar. The impact knocked the air from his lungs, the whip handle slipped from his hands, and after a motionless moment, gravity kicked in and he fell on his back, stiff as a board.

That alone would probably have not been sufficient to take him out of commission, but when one factored in the force with which the back of his head banged against the stone floor, he was doomed. Billowing smoke rose before his eyes, and his attempt to sit up was just a helpless protest. Powerless, he fell back again and felt his senses leave him.

When he opened his eyes, he saw the monk who had been standing guard crouched over him, looking down with a half-inquiring, half-incredulous expression, as if behold-ing someone who had fallen from the sky.

The monk withdrew, apparently surprised that the seemingly unconscious man had suddenly opened his eyes. He started to jump up and opened his mouth to scream, but he succeeded at neither. Indiana's fist quickly caught him just below the chin. The monk froze as if struck by lightning, rolling his eyes and tipping forward with a creak, unconscious.

Indiana allowed himself a few breaths, recovering before he rolled to the side and freed himself from the weight of the body lying on top of him. He remained motionless, listening to the silence. Incredibly, nothing stirred anywhere in the monastery. The monk had been struck down seemingly seconds before he could sound the alarm.

Indiana didn't waste time thanking the fates for his good fortune. He got up, climbed onto the podium and approached the black, stone altar with the two statues of Horus. A feeling of accomplishment surged within him, nearly drowning out his throbbing head and the two bruises, on his forehead and the back of his head, which his unsuccessful Tarzan act had earned him. With shining eyes, he beheld the figures. They were the spitting image of the one from the National Museum, and he wondered what made these special, out of all the hundreds of other Horus statues. Was it their specific size, shape, or something else entirely — perhaps something beyond human comprehension?

He gently took the two statuettes from their respective hollows and put them in his leather bag. This completed the first part of his task. Now he just had to find the old monk in the gold-embroidered robe.

"Did you really think you could rob us of our greatest treasure?" sounded a familiar voice behind him in perfect English, the accusation echoing against the rock.

Indiana froze and swallowed hard. When he was finally able to bring himself to turn around, the precise sight that he had feared was waiting for him.

Behind him, in the passage to the cathedral, the old monk stood with arms folded across his chest and a quizzical look on his face. He was accompanied by a handful of other monks, carrying torches, swords, and spears in their hands. A glance upward showed Indiana that men in orange robes filled the three balconies above him.

He had to admit that he had been wrong.

He wouldn’t have any trouble finding the monk.

* * *

The Horus statues were returned to their hollows in the altar. Fifteen minutes had passed. Indiana was not three feet away from the figures on the pedestal, now guarded by several monks with sabers, just waiting for him to attempt an escape. However, it was best not to think about it. They had taken his gun and tied his hands behind his back. He had let it happen without a fight. With their superior numbers, his weapon could have caused some senseless deaths at most, but ultimately wouldn’t have changed his plight.

No one moved in the great hall, as all the monks waited patiently for instructions. To Indiana, it seemed almost like a tribunal, one where the outcome was fixed from the beginning.

“I knew you would come back, American,” said the old monk, who actually appeared to have a prominent position. The other monks listened to him respectfully. “This afternoon at the gate, I could see the fire in your eyes. The type of fire that is not extinguished until you reach your goal. You are in search of the labyrinth, and you need the statues to open the final chamber. And perhaps you’re just the first of many that have taken on this quest.” He looked down, and he sounded almost sad. “It fills me with shame that we could not prevent it.”

“Labyrinth, final chamber…?” Indy questioned, feigning ignorance. “I don’t even know what it is you’re talking about.”

“Oh, you Americans. Don’t try to pretend. I know exactly the reason you’re here.” He paused. “And in some ways we’re even grateful. Or did you seriously believe you could have gotten into our monastery so easily, if we had not wanted it?”

Indiana did not answer, but the twitch in his cheek demonstrated that this was like a slap in the face. Of course, all of it had been a setup: the empty chamber, the deserted corridors, the easily dispensed with guard (who had now regained consciousness and stood among the other monks, rubbing his battered chin and staring grimly at Indiana) — it all should have made him suspicious. But he was too focused on his goal to worry about any of it.

Instead, he had blindly walked into a trap. It was the same mistake he had committed sixteen years ago in Central America.

Then, Basil Smith had saved him. And today? He was left with little choice but to hope that Finnley would appear as his guardian angel. But Finnley wasn't expecting him to return for hours yet.

"What do you mean by that?" he asked the monk.

"Why would you be grateful that I came here?"

His adversary took some time before answering.

"It's quite simple, American. You have done us the favor of finding the third figure of Horus. Furthermore, you've brought it to us. Is that not a reason to be grateful?"

Indiana tried not to show fear. How the hell could the monks know that they possessed the third statuette?

"I'm afraid you've got it completely wrong." He forced a smile. "You searched me thoroughly. Where would you get the idea that I'd have such a statue with me?"

"Not you, American. But your companions."

"Companions?" he exclaimed in surprise, without hope of achieving anything. "What companions? I have no companions!"

The monk smiled enigmatically.

"Really?" he asked rhetorically. "Then you wouldn't recognize any of these people."

He looked toward the monks stationed at the gangway, and clapped his hands quickly. One of the men went away and returned soon afterward, leading two figures into the great hall. The sight turned Indiana a little paler than he already was.

Liz and Finnley! They too had their hands tied behind their backs and were brought to the platform with Indiana.

Indiana's lips tightened when he saw them. So there they were — his back-up plan. But Raymond was missing.

Was Basil's son planning something? Did he want to play the hero in this abduction?

"We couldn't do anything," Finnley said before Indiana could ask. "The monks took us completely by surprise, just a few minutes after you left, Dr. Jones. Any resistance would have been pointless."

"We could have at least tried," Liz blurted out sullenly.

Written on her face was a mixture of fear and anxiety. "After all, there were enough weapons in the Land Rover to hold them off."

"We never would have reached the vehicle," Finnley answered in her direction. "You know as well as I know!"

Turning to Indiana, he added: “So *neither one* of us put up any fight.”

The way Finnley emphasized the words made it clear to Indiana that under no circumstances should he should mention Raymond.

“How nice that you have so much to talk about, when you’ve never seen each other before,” the old monk spoke again. “But I suppose you’ve made friends quite quickly.”

He became serious again, as one of the other men handed him the statuette of Horus that Indiana had left with Finnley. The monk took it, held it gently with both hands, and looked it over with awe. “And this is indeed the third figure, of which you know nothing. So likely you would not mind if it were to stay in our possession from now on, just like its two counterparts. Here in the monastery they are safe. We will make sure that they never make it to their destination.”

While he took the statuette to the black altar and placed the wooden figure in the pit alongside the Horus head, Finnley used the opportunity to discreetly move closer to Indiana, as the nearest monks were standing just a few feet away, daring Indy to whisper without visible lip movements:

“What about Raymond?”

“He’s disappeared,” Finnley whispered just as softly.

“Disappeared?”

A barely perceptible shrug.

“Maybe he escaped just in time. I don’t have a clue. In any case, the monks have not caught him. And they also don’t seem to suspect him of anything.”

Indiana didn’t know whether to be pleased or not. The idea of Raymond as their only hope did not exactly fill him with confidence. When it came to matters of life and death, Basil’s son was about as good as a child’s rattle against an oncoming tank.

“Did he at least have a weapon with him?”

“Not that I know of.”

Even better — an unarmed Raymond! A broken baby rattle against ten tanks.

One of the monks joined him, unceremoniously smack-ing the blunt end of his lance against their backs, making it unmistakably clear that their conversation was not wanted. Indiana gave him a nod to communicate that they understood, and he could save himself

further trouble. Then he turned his attention back to the old monk, who came over to them from the altar.

"I assume you brought all three of us together," Indiana tried to persuade their guide, "to tell us you're releasing us, right?" It was a rhetorical question. His experience told him the one thing they weren't going to do was release them.

"I'm sorry, but that's impossible. You already know too much about the labyrinth. We cannot let you go."

Indiana knew what that meant.

"But what about my father?" Liz exclaimed. "You let him go. And you even told him the location of the labyrinth.

We know that he was here in the monastery. Why did you let him go, if you intend to keep us trapped?"

"So you are the daughter of the bearded man," said the monk. "I should have guessed. You have the same eyes as him. Only you lack his wisdom."

"That is not the point!" she said excitedly. Indiana saved himself the trouble of trying to calm her. No matter what she said, it could hardly make it any worse for them.

"You have not answered my question. Or do you not have an answer?"

The monk nodded sadly.

"The bearded man was in fact our guest here for a couple of days," he admitted. "He appeared to care for this monastery and wanted to explore its origins. Our order has lived here for many generations, but the monastery was previously abandoned for some time, so we too wanted to know more about it. And the bearded man had a great knowledge about the old times. We even allowed the soldiers who accompanied him to pitch their tents in front of the monastery." He looked at Finnley. "Soldiers who were dressed just like you. In this way he subtly gained our confidence, which he abused in the most shameful manner.

For from the start he only wanted to learn the location of the labyrinth. After he found out that there are some among us who have this knowledge, he forced one such to reveal everything to him one night. Then he slipped away with his soldiers."

So! Indiana was covered in a mixture of admiration and respect. Basil had executed exactly the same plan as he himself had intended. No wonder that the monks were prepared for him.

“The next morning we discovered his disappearance,”

said the monk. “And we found our brother dead in his chamber. With his throat cut.”

The respect that Indiana had just felt transformed abruptly to disgust and discomfort. He had no reason to distrust the words of the monk. But for all his archaeological zeal, such an act was not easily attributed to a cultured and civilized person like Basil Smith.

“That’s not true!” Liz shouted in protest. “My father would never kill a man! It must have been someone else.

Someone from your monastery. Did you launch a proper investigation?”

An indignant murmur arose among the surrounding people, at least among those who were knowledgeable in the English language. The monk did not respond to Liz’s allegations, but said further:

“We tracked down the bearded man as far as the labyrinth, but because no member of the order is allowed to go near this building, we had to limit ourselves to observing him from a distance and waiting until he left again. We saw him uncover the hidden entrance, and we also looked on as he and his men disappeared inside.” He sighed. “When he had not come forth again after a few days, we returned home. For us it was over. There are plenty of traps in the labyrinth, and over the last millennia, the few who have discovered it and tried to break into the underground chambers, have mostly drawn their final breathes in the first few rooms. None of them ever returned.” He shook his head, as if there was something he still could not understand. “But the bearded man managed to see sunlight again. And not only that. He had also pushed forward to the last room, spoken of in the old legends.”

“The chamber with the tomb of Horus,” Indiana chimed in.

“That is correct.” The monk looked at him. “Today, we too know how the bearded man managed to get through the labyrinth unharmed. He had a map of the underground chambers with him, detailing the one safe path through.

We learned this from of one of his soldiers, whom we found a week later, half unconscious in the desert. The spirit of the man was confused, but he had bits and pieces of information to share with us. After a few days, we left him with a passing caravan, so that he could return to his people.”

Indiana and Finnley exchanged a brief glance. That must have been the soldier who had turned up in Luxor and was later murdered in the hospital.

“Through him, we know that the bearded man succumbed to the temptations of evil, and was now only interested in gaining possession of the three statues of Horus. For they are the key with which the last chamber can be opened. But this must never happen. Never.” The monk muttered the last word with the utmost determination, and after a moment to calm his heavy breathing, he continued, “In order to prevent this travesty, we had only one option. We had to collect the three statues before the bearded man. Or at least one or two of them, because all three of them are used together to open the chamber.”

“The first one you found in Khartoum, and the second from the grave chamber in Luxor,” Finnley added.

“You have named these sites correctly,” confirmed the monk. “But we anticipated that the third statue was with the bearded man. My brothers were only able to track him up to the three great pyramids…”

Liz stared at him wide-eyed.

“Then…” She paused. “Then you killed my father!

You are his murderers!” Despite her manacled hands, she tried to dive toward the monk, but two other men grabbed her by the arms and led her back, in spite of protests by Finnley and Indiana.

The monk shook his head indulgently.

“No, we are not. I admit that — if we had gotten a hold of him — we might have done so, in order to avenge his murderous crime, and to avert the great danger that he was conjuring. But at the pyramids, my brothers lost sight of him at dawn, and before they could find him again, you all appeared there — along with a fourth person. Therefore they considered it prudent to withdraw. Over the next few days, after they had found out that the bearded man was dead, they made their way back. Since we already had two of the statues, the third was not so important. We also suspected that you would show up sooner or later, bringing the last one with you.” He smiled and glanced at the black stone cube. “And we were not mistaken.”

Finnley, irritated, raised his right eyebrow.

“One thing I do not understand. How could you know the whereabouts of the statues? Theoretically, they could have been kept

in any museum in the world that has an Egyptian section!"

"And believe me, Englishmen, we would have found them no matter where they were hidden!" The monk closed his eyes briefly, and for a moment he looked endlessly worn and tired. He raised his arms in a solemn gesture. "These statues are not only simple figures, but they are illuminated by a special aura. They hold the power of the mind and the breath of Horus. As inconspicuous they may appear, for those who know the ancient, traditional rites of the Old Kingdom, they are as easy to find as the sun in the blue sky. But for you people from the north, so proud of your young cultures; you who think you are so clever and wise, and who have showered the entire earth in a bloody war; for you these are only fairy tales, and you are not ready to behold them."

It was obvious Finnley had difficulties with this explanation. But he refrained from any comment. Indiana, however, took every word of the monk at face value. He had already come across too many such phenomena. And also — why would the monk lie to them?

"Since you're answering questions," Indiana started.

"Why did your people emerge in Bursa and Crete? There were no statues there." He asked the question though he already thought he knew the answer. And the monk gave him what he was expecting.

"To protect the whole of the labyrinth, the statues were not enough. We knew that the bearded man has, in your countries, a prestigious name. Even if he did not reach his destination, it was inevitable that others would follow him, seeking also the labyrinth. You yourselves are the best example. Therefore, we wiped out once and for all the information that the bearded man had found: the parchments of Herodotus in Bursa, and the mosaic in the Palace of Knossos. We learned of both from the soldier we found in the desert. These were the only threads that led to the labyrinth; everything else is just a legend. Only because they were wiped out can we guarantee the terrible secret will be safe in the future."

The puzzle was now almost a complete picture, with just a few pieces yet missing — and all of them concerned Basil Smith and the labyrinth. As an archaeologist, it filled him with a certain satisfaction that the original parchments, which he had saved from the fire, were now safe in the National Museum in Cairo. But he could not trust the old monk with this knowledge, of course. The mosaic at Knossos, however, was lost for all time. The only thing which still existed was

the drawing that they had brought from Crete. He had left it in the Land Rover before he had come to the monastery. He had no illusions about the fact that the plans — if they failed to come out of this alive —

would sooner or later fall into the monks' hands.

Unfortunately, Indiana quickly learned that they were one step behind the monks yet again. The head monk clapped his hands once more, whereupon two strong men brought in a large wrought-iron basket whose floor was covered with hot coals.

"So these things we found in your vehicle must be put in the fire," he said, while other monks passed him two folded papers and a small booklet.

"My father's notebook!" Liz screamed in horror.

"The drawing of the mosaic!" Indiana spat between clenched teeth.

"And my copy of it!" Finnley added contritely.

The monk smiled pityingly and went to the basket. Indiana acted just like Liz had a few minutes earlier — moving to tackle him in order to prevent what was coming

— in spite of his bound hands. But the men around him had clearly anticipated such a reaction and moved closer to restrain him. He realized that he had no chance to get anywhere near the monk, and resigned himself to the inevitable.

"I just hope you were smart enough to make make a second copy of those plans," he hissed at Finnley quietly.

The sergeant made an embarrassed face.

"I, uh, well... Unfortunately, no." He shook his head.

"Time did not allow it."

With helpless rage, they watched as the monk threw the plans on the glowing coals, with a transfigured face, as if he were undertaking a sacred act. The paper immediately caught fire. The flames ate it within seconds, turning it to ash, which swirled up in the heat.

Indiana's face was petrified. Any chance to navigate through the chambers of the underground section was gone.

What had the old monk said before? Over the last thousand years, everyone who entered had drawn his last breath in the first few chambers. How many were considered the first few? Five, ten, twenty? Out of a total of fifteen hundred chambers!

Indiana knew the meticulousness and the ingenuity the ancient builders were capable of in constructing their traps. One thousand five hundred chambers was enough space for an infinite number of variations. Indiana was certain that venturing to the underground part of the labyrinth without a map meant suicide, and the monk knew it just as well. Indy took a deep breath. If there still was a map of the chambers, it was the one Basil Smith had been carrying. But the professor was dead, and his notebook had nothing about it. So how would they ever find his map?

"What would really be so bad about opening the final chamber?" he asked, mostly to distract himself from his helplessness. All they had achieved in the last few weeks seemed to be slipping away like sand between their fingers.

But his question was enough to make the old monk grow pale.

"Do you not know the ancient prophecies, which say that Horus will rise again at the end of time?" he exclaimed in an awed voice. "He will soar up to become the ruler of the world, crush the nations under his feet, and lead the people to eternal damnation. And none will oppose him! Thus it is written…"

It sounded bombastic and exaggerated, but Indiana knew better than to take it lightly. As mystical as these ancient texts often sounded, they often contained an element of truth. And who could say how big that element would be in this case — when the subject was nothing less than a god incarnate!

"To eternal damnation…?" repeated Liz in disbelief.

"All the people? But that would mean that… that…"

"The Apocalypse", Finnley offered, seemingly unswayed by the notion.

Liz laughed uncertainly.

"What nonsense!" she said, feigning a lack of concern.

"How could such a thing be possible? I thought this Horus died thousands of years ago."

The monk approached her with slow steps, staring at Liz insistently, as if to hypnotize her.

"The chamber is indeed the tomb of Horus, but that does not mean that he is dead," he corrected her emphatically. His eyes turned to Indiana and Finnley. "Gods cannot die — did you not know that?"

His words echoed in the silence, and nobody could respond to it. Indiana felt a queasy feeling in his bones, and suddenly he was not so sure if he really wanted to see with his own eyes what lay beyond the last chamber door — if he should ever have the chance.

Silent seconds passed until Liz was the first to speak, once again finding a way to bring this existential crisis back to the practical problems of their present situation.

"And what will happen to us?" she asked. "What will you do with us?"

Indiana wished she had waited a bit with this question, because he wasn't sure he wanted to know the answer. But now the question was out there.

Raymond, he thought, as if Basil's son could hear it if he concentrated hard enough, if you were planning to get us out of here, then you better get started quickly!

The old monk allowed himself a few deep breaths and took time to look at each of them in order.

"Believe me," he replied with a regretful voice. "We did not come to this decision easily. But we have no choice.

You must never leave this place again."

"You mean to keep us trapped here, forever?" asked Liz, and Indiana saw that she didn't understand what fate awaited them. Or he did not understand it. "What if we abandon our search for the labyrinth and promise you we won't tell anybody anything about it? Then you can let us go."

The monk looked at her pityingly.

"Would you do this?" he asked. "Would you never tell anyone even a single word about it?"

"Of course!" she quickly assured him. "No problem! If we promise you something, then you can be sure…" Under the watchful eye of the monk, she began to falter, and she lowered her eyes. "I mean, we… Of course we would never…" She broke off. She simply could not push the lie between her lips.

"Don't you see?" asked the monk, pained. "That's why we cannot allow it." He sighed and straightened his shoulders. "Today, you will face whatever god in whom you believe. The only thing we can promise is that we will make the transition as quickly and painlessly as possible for you."

Liz stared at him with wide eyes and seemed to finally understand.

"You... you want to kill us? Just like that? Just so we won't give anything away?" She sent a pleading stare to Finnley and Indiana, and the fact that neither of them vocally disagreed or did anything else to argue only increased her despair. "You can't do that!" she cried from behind the monk, who had turned away and was walking back to the altar. "This... this is wrong!"

"What is right and what is wrong when it comes to preventing evil from coming upon the earth?" the monk replied philosophically. "What are a lives of a few people when all humanity is at stake? When we are dealing with the end of the world?"

Indiana pressed his lips together. As nice as the monk's words sounded, in the end they all led to the same thing: their cold-blooded murder.

"I think you are oversimplifying things," Finnley said, with his head held high and his voice firm. He seemed to be totally unimpressed, considering his death sentence had just been pronounced. By now, Indiana knew him well enough to understand that this was just a facade. "I would like to draw your attention to the fact that I am a member of the British Army, and this is an official mission. If we do not return, they will start looking for us. They will inevitably find their way here, and at the very least you will have to put up with a lot of uncomfortable questions.

Even if you dispose of those men, there will be others sent after them. And then more. And each time they will come in greater numbers. Do you really think you can take on the entire British Army?"

Indiana suspected that Finnley was only playing poker.

The old monk could hardly know that, but it still left him unimpressed.

"We will guard the secret of the labyrinth, even if every last one of us has to take it with us to the grave," he said solemnly. "Each of us is willing to sacrifice himself for the survival of the world." He nodded thoughtfully, then turned his gaze back to the prisoners. "It is time to redeem yourselves. May you find paradise on the other side." He clapped his hands, summoning the two stalwart monks who had carried in the wrought-iron basket, and then he pointed to Liz. "We will begin with her."

Liz screamed in horror as the two men grabbed her and dragged her to the altar. All her resistance accomplished nothing. She was forced to her knees, and someone grabbed her by the hair and pushed her head down on the surface of the polished stone, so that her neck was bent over the edge. Another monk appeared beside her and solemnly raised his sword, which he held with both hands.

It had all happened so fast that Indiana felt totally overwhelmed. Liz had given up crying long ago. Under the iron grip that held her by the hair, she turned her head far enough that her pleading eyes met Indiana's. Her eyes spoke of limitless panic and a desperate cry for help.

Indiana did not think, but just darted away. Before the first monk tried to stop him, he turned into a kind of a football player, ramming his shoulder into the body of the monk with the saber, hurling him down from the platform.

He made it to Liz just in time to deliver a quick kick in the gut to the monk who had her by the hair, before half a dozen other monks surrounded him. They grabbed at him from all sides, and a murderous left hook into his unprotected stomach left him on his knees, groaning and gasping for air.

Even the grateful look he caught from Liz did not convince him that his desperate action had given her more than a few seconds. A period that was gone in a moment.

The man with the saber had came back to the altar, acknowledging Indiana without so much as a glance, and returned to his place next to Liz's blond head, holding it so that the blade could hit its target accurately.

The man lowered his sword again, the bringing the blade to Liz's neck once more, positioning himself to perfect his bloody work. Indiana pulled in vain against the arms that held him relentlessly. This time he would have to look on, helpless.

A determined look came on the face of the executioner, bringing the sword above his head with a quick flick —

when something happened that stiffened him like a pillar of salt, just like all the other monks.

Machine gun fire!

From outside the cathedral, but without doubt from within the monastery, not more than a few passages away.

And because the seconds before had been quiet enough to hear the proverbial pin drop, the shots rang loudly throughout the hall.

Raymond! Indiana exclaimed in his head. That could be none other than Raymond! What a ruthless guy!

The sound of a second gun mingled with that of the machine gun, and in his mind's eye appeared the image of Basil's son rushing through the corridors, shooting from firearms in both hands. With this idea came with the vague fear that Raymond might accidentally shoot himself or be hit by a ricochet before he reached the cathedral.

Unrest arose among the monks, and no one seemed to know what it meant, or how they should react. The old monk was trying to bring his chaotic congregation to order, shouting commands and pointing excitedly to the passage.

Some of his monks, armed with spears and swords, started to move that way, but before they could leave the great hall, they were suddenly struck down by yet a third volley of gunfire from the passage.

Even as they fell, mortally wounded, the excitement of the monks turned to panic. For heaven's sake, Raymond only had two arms!

But if not Raymond, then who could...?

Before he could even finish thinking the question, the answer presented itself, as three men stormed in from the passage that lead to the top balcony of the cathedral, their machine guns ready, and after a short moment of orienta-tion, opened fire.

They were soldiers — British soldiers!

But they were anything but the image of a neat, well-run unit. Their faces were haggard and unshaven, their uniforms dirty and torn.

The amazement and relief at their sudden appearance soon gave way to sheer horror, as Indiana realized that random bursts of gunfire were raining down onto the lower two levels of the cathedral, scattering the ranks of monks as the shooters targeted anything that moved. Although a number of monks were armed with spears and swords, none of them posed any serious opposition. Everyone was in panic, anxious to get to safety. But where? The passage was the only way to leave the hall, but the soldiers were there, spitting death and destruction from their machine guns.

Indiana realized that he would inevitably be torn to shreds by bullets if he continued to stand still. It did not look as if the soldiers

were paying him any special consideration, and he couldn't even be sure if they were there to rescue them, or if they just meant to shoot everyone in the entire monastery, even if there were a couple of innocent prisoners among them.

He sprang to his feet, without being stopped by anyone this time. Of the monks who still surrounded him, no one thought to stop him. He was just a few steps from the executioner, who was still standing beside Liz with his upraised sword, apparently unable to decide whether he should behead her before or after turning his attention to these new opponents. Indiana did not intend to let him make that decision. For a second time, he rammed his shoulder into the monk's body. With a groaning sound, the man flew from the platform again.

"Take cover!" he shouted to Liz, who seemed only now to realize that there was nobody left to hold her down. "Behind the sacrificial stone!"

As she obeyed his instructions, dazed, Indiana also hastily sought safety beside her. Not a second later, Finnley joined the duo. The sergeant dived from the far side, despite his manacled hands, and slid on his stomach across the polished surface engraved with the image of Horus, knocking the three statuettes out of their wells. Then he plopped down next to Liz behind the black rock, a second before a volley whistled over their heads and forced them deeper into cover.

Indiana tried not to lose sight of the statuettes, three lifeless figures among all the running and chaos. The executioner monk appeared, however, before he could attempt to gather them. He grabbed the sword that he'd dropped when he'd fallen, and threw himself toward the prisoners with a furious and determined grimace. Indiana saw him coming and pulled his legs under him in order to ram the man's body once more — the only defense that he had in his present position.

But before he could attack, the monk stopped as if he had run head first into a wall, and three red stains slowly appeared around the three bullet holes in his orange robe.

Liz would not be afraid of him anymore.

"Stop!" Indiana heard Finnley yell. "Cease fire, at once!"

According to the rank on their uniforms, the three men who had emerged were simple soldiers, and should obey him. Either his roar was lost in the chaos below, or none of the men thought to listen to

him. The next few seconds — or it may have been minutes, he could not say —

blurred together in Indiana's mind as a bloody crescendo of machine gun fire, whistling ricochets, and the monks'

screams of pain and death, while he pressed close against the black rock with Finnley and Liz, waiting until the uniformed grim reapers calmed and inevitably caught them with their machine guns drawn.

The next thing he knew, a figure appeared above him and from the corner of his eye he saw the flash of a knife blade. He looked up, but if it had been an attacker his reaction certainly would have been too late.

"Raymond…?" he exclaimed breathlessly.

Basil's son did not answer, but instead bent down and cut his bonds, and of course couldn't do so without almost accidentally slitting his wrists. Once the ropes were loose, he took a look at his hands. Luckily the cut was across back of his hand and not deep enough to cause concern.

Raymond! It was Raymond after all! But what the hell was Basil's son doing with these trigger-happy soldiers?

"What…?" he began to formulate the appropriate question, while Raymond rushed to his sister, to fuss with her shackles.

"Later!" Raymond hissed back in a hurry. "There's no time for that now."

A moment later, he succeeded in freeing Liz and ran to Finnley.

Indiana found that the machine gun fire had died down.

Only an occasional burst of fire rang through the great hall.

He dared to raise his head over the edge of the altar, and he saw the same three soldiers from the passage. The fact that one of them looked over briefly to him and did *not* open fire convinced him that they were drawing at least some distinction between his party and the monks. Another of the men sent a blast high into the balconies at the same moment, as he must have spotted a shaved head there.

The entire floor of the hall was covered with dead and wounded figures, and smelled of gunpowder and blood. It looked like a slaughterhouse. Only one word could accurately describe the scene: massacre. An unnecessary and senseless massacre. Indiana felt boundless anger rising within him. The monks may have intended to kill them just a few minutes earlier — but they did not deserve this.

“Raymond!” he blurted, having a mind to hurl himself blindly at the three men and make them pay for their crimes. “How could you allow…”

“No time!” interrupted Raymond, who had now managed to undo Finnley’s shackles. The sergeant stood up, and like Liz, horror was written all over his face. “We have to get out here before the monks recover from the shock.

Otherwise all is lost!”

“Shock,” Indiana repeated in his thoughts. How could he say such a thing? Was Raymond oblivious to what had happened here? Was he indifferent to the lives of all these people?

But Basil’s son was right on one point. They had to get out of the monastery as quickly as possible. It wouldn’t be long before the monks became aware that they outnumbered their attackers and launched a counter-attack. And after what had happened here, there was no doubt their revenge would be merciless.

As if the idea were already in motion, suddenly dozens of spears rained down from the upper galleries. Most bounced uselessly off the stone floor, but one of them found its way into the chest of a soldier. The force of the throw was enough to propel the tip of the spear through his torso and protrude through his back a few inches. The man fell, mortally wounded, and Indiana was disturbed to see him utter no cry of pain, though his face was strangely distorted.

In fact, it now seemed unusually happy, almost overjoyed, as if death were a welcome relief. And it seemed no less strange to Indiana that the other two soldiers were not in the least concerned about what had happened to their colleague. They gave him a single glance, then targeted the upper balconies with further bursts.

“Quickly, come!” Raymond’s voice penetrated Indiana’s thoughts. He took his sister, who still looked completely dazed, by the arm and pulled her toward the passage, as he pointed behind them. “And don’t forget to bring the statues!”

The statues! This thought brought Indiana completely back to reality.

He jumped off the platform, found the first two statuettes quickly and stowed them in his leather pouch. He needed a few seconds to find the third, while a new barrage of spears poured down on the two remaining soldiers, who this time managed to avoid injury.

The figure was half hidden under the motionless body of a monk lying face down. As he knelt down beside him to take it, he suddenly felt resistance. The man kept the figure in his hands, and in trying to wrest it from him, Indy rolled him onto his back.

Then he realized that he was dealing with the old head monk. The magnificent fabric of his gold-embroidered robe was soaked with blood. A thin trickle of blood ran down from the lips of the man, but he was conscious. He clasped the figure with both hands tightly, as if his life depended on it.

“No!” the monk gasped, almost inaudibly, and the desperate look in his bulging eyes hit Indiana directly in the heart.

Stunned, he fell back. He’d have a hard time snatching the statue from such a man, especially since he’d probably have to break his fingers to do so. With tremendous effort, the monk managed to lift his head, and his eyes widened with life.

“It... it must not come to be,” he said haltingly. “The last chamber must not be opened. You must make sure...”

He coughed and fell back slightly. Indiana instinctively grabbed him by the shoulders and supported him. The monk winced, but under normal circumstances he might have smiled gratefully.

“You must not allow the... the chamber to be opened,”

he pressed on. “Promise me, American! You must...”

His strength allowed no more. He sank back, and Indiana rested his head as gently as possible on the stone floor.

“Dr. Jones!” Raymond’s voice reached him from afar.

“What are you doing? Hurry, for God’s sake!”

Indiana felt something bordering on disgust as he took the statuette from the monk’s lifeless fingers and put it in his bag. A spear banged against the floor a half foot from him, prompting him to look up. Several monks appeared in a corner of the balcony where they could not be reached by the two soldiers’ salvos, and used the opportunity to get in a throw. But their spear did not hit its target.

Indiana’s hand went automatically to his hips, not to return fire, but to show the monks up there that it would be wiser for them to retreat quickly, but his fingers groped only the empty holster. Of course! he exclaimed in his mind. He had momentarily forgotten that he had been disarmed.

Realizing his mistake, he sprinted to the entrance at the other end of the great hall, where his comrades were waiting impatiently for

him. Somehow he managed to arrive without being hit by a spear. The refugees could now proceed together, leaving the great hall behind them and plunging into the bloody system of tunnels that followed the passage.

Raymond took the lead and seemed to know exactly which branches were unprotected and which were dangerous. The two soldiers took responsibility for the rear guard, occasionally firing a volley to prevent them from being followed. But luckily, at least as far as Indiana was able to observe while running, none of the monks were so foolish as to try. But the tunnel itself was littered with bloody, lifeless figures from earlier, anyway. The disgust in Indiana grew.

After a while, they were joined by two more soldiers, who had been keeping watch at the junction of two large corridors. They did not appear any less run down than their colleagues. Without a word they joined the larger group, following Raymond on ahead. Indiana was suddenly aware that he hadn't heard any of the soldiers utter a single word. The whole campaign was run in complete silence — apart from Raymond. Usually this would be a sign of an experienced team, but Indiana wouldn't describe these pitiful figures as such. Something about the behavior of the soldiers struck him as odd, and it wasn't just the ruthlessness they had demonstrated.

When they reached the great gate, they found one side was wide open. Here, too, dead men lay on the floor, and the petrified expression on Finnley's face at this latest sight suggested that he intended for the soldiers — all of them —

to appear before a military court, even though they had appeared as his salvation. In the meantime, however, he held his tongue, neglecting to comment on the men's actions, though technically he was their superior. The manner in which his earlier command to cease fire had been ignored showed him how much validity the military hierarchy had at the moment.

Beyond the gate sat the two Land Rovers, which the monks had driven to the monastery after the capture of Finnley and Liz. Beside it was an empty Jeep in which the soldiers must have come.

Indiana was in total surprise when one of the soldiers suddenly raised his machine gun and riddled the tires of the Jeep with holes.

"What are you...?" Indy started furiously, as the soldier cut him off with a hoarse voice.

“It’s almost out of petrol,” he said tersely, as if that were the final word on the subject. In fact, they were the first words any of the soldiers had spoken. Indiana couldn’t put his finger on it, but something about the way the words sounded seemed strange. The soldier pointed briefly to the two Land Rovers. “We’ll take these. Follow us!”

He turned to the other soldiers and they entered one of the Land Rovers, clearly uninterested in any further questions. A moment later, the engine started, the lights blazed forth, and the vehicle rolled out into the desert.

“What are you waiting for?” exclaimed Raymond, who had already climbed into the driver’s seat of the other vehicle. “Get in! We have to get out of here.”

The angry cries from inside the monastery were fast approaching, indicating that Basil’s son was right. No sooner had he entered, than he pressed on the gas and chased the other car through the night. Indiana looked back through the rear window and saw some monks with torches storming through the gates, their fists raised into the night sky.

Others ran hurriedly toward the other building, returning shortly thereafter on horseback. It was the stables, as he had suspected. He would have preferred to have been mistaken on this point.

So the game was not over yet! But at the moment they held the better cards. With the two utility vehicles, they should be able to shake off their pursuers — at least if they didn’t puncture a tire in the process.

“How… how could you do it, Raymond?” Liz found her words again. She looked at her brother in horror. “Didn’t you see all the killing back there? But you did nothing to stop it?”

“I, uh…” Raymond turned the steering wheel hastily as the car rumbled over a rough spot, shaking them all vigorously. “Believe me, Liz, I’m just as concerned as you are. I… I didn’t know what to do. Otherwise I would, of course…” He talked more and more urgently, until his voice almost cracked. “But those men won’t listen to me, or did you think I ordered them to do that? I don’t know why they did that, I mean, they just… just…” The rest was unintelligible stammering.

“How did you come across these people?” Finnley posed the question before Indiana had a chance to do so.

“Earlier, shortly after Dr. Jones slipped away to the monastery, I left briefly to… uh… I had to… I wanted to…” He paused. “I mean, I had to use the little boys’

room. And when I came back, I saw you two were being taken prisoner by the monks, so I did my disappearing act.”

“And the soldiers?” Finnley reminded him.

“The soldiers, yes, of course. The — uh — I intercepted them outside the monastery. Or rather, they intercepted me.” He bowed his head, as if embarrassed to admit it.

“They belong to the group that accompanied my father.”

Indiana nodded silently. He had thought as much.

“They told me that they were here to get the three statuettes,” gushed Raymond. “And of course I persuaded them to help me with the rescue operation. Honestly, I was glad to have them. How was I supposed to know that they… that such a thing…” He fell silent, shocked, and shook his head.

Meanwhile, he had caught up to the other Land Rover, and when they drove off the road that had led them to the monastery, he followed them out into the open desert.

Indiana threw a worried glance out the rear window. In the pitch-dark night, he couldn’t make out any riders pursuing them, but then again he couldn’t make out anything at all, so Indiana would have bet his hat that somewhere an angry horde of monks was chasing them.

“Where are we going, anyway?” he asked, turning to Raymond.

“Where are we going?” Raymond repeated, as if it were the most ridiculous question he had ever heard. He gig-gled almost hysterically, and Indiana attributed it to what Basil’s son had witnessed over the last few hours. “The labyrinth of course! Where else?”

7

The Labyrinth
June 13, 1941

They reached the labyrinth in the early evening of the next day.

From the outside it looked quite unimpressive. A naive man would have never believed that this was possibly the largest building in the history of mankind. No trace of mighty walls was visible, only a small pyramid that rose out of the endless sea of sand before them, perhaps ten feet into the evening sky. Compared to the Pyramids of Giza, it looked about as impressive as a paddle boat next to an aircraft carrier.

Indiana wasn't allowing himself to be misled by this rather disappointing sight. He knew that what they saw was only the uppermost part of the pyramid, located at the edge of the labyrinth. He had memorized this part of Basil's notebook, which recorded that the pyramid was a total of sixty yards high. Just like an iceberg, the vast majority was below the surface. Perhaps in recent years, even this small peak had been covered by the Sahara, whose winds were continuously shifting the dunes. But the pyramid was little more than decorative. The building itself, unfortunately, was entirely out of sight. Still, Indiana felt a strange excitement at the thought that it

could be right under their feet. He tried to think about what specifically lay directly beneath them, and gave up on it immediately.

If one trusted Herodotus — and so far, all his statements had proven to be correct — it must have covered an area of several square *miles*. If the above-ground chambers were open at the top, they must have been completely filled with sand, and it would require a large-scale excavation before they would be visible. He wondered how thick the layer of sand was between his feet and the building. Ten feet?

Twenty? Thirty? Even in the best case, one would need hundreds of experienced workers, thousands of volunteers, plenty of modern equipment and a number of years to unearth it. It was a thought that Indiana calmed somewhat.

It decreased the chances that this site would easily be co-opted by any military for their own purposes.

These were his first thoughts after they had parked the two Land Rovers and stepped out near the top of the pyramid. Indiana's heartbeat quickened involuntarily as he looked up at the opening to the pyramid's interior that had been blasted open about three yards ahead of them.

It was not exactly professional to use such rough method, but he had to concede that Smith had at least applied the dynamite judiciously, having determined exactly where the charges should be placed. Whatever markings had guided him to the right location, though, had been totally destroyed in the blast. Such a reckless approach did not suit Basil Smith — as it was with so much of what Indiana had heard about in recent weeks. On the other hand, he could understand at least a little that, after finally reaching the labyrinth, the professor would have wanted to get in at any cost. And who knew — perhaps he would have done the same, if he had been in the professor's place?

He turned when he heard Finnley speaking with the four soldiers who had brought them here.

"Now that we are finally at the labyrinth, isn't it time for you to cough up some answers?" asked Finnley, his voice laced with determination not to be placated by evasive explanations. "Why did you not report back to the army after you found the labyrinth? And above all, what in God's name were you thinking, causing such a senseless massacre at the monastery?"

It was not the first time he had tried to take the soldiers to task. Although they had been driving all day through the desert, always behind the soldier's vehicle, twice they had taken a short rest to replenish the gas tanks from their reserves. But even on those occasions it had been impossible to extract anything from the soldiers. Even as Finnley reminded them that he was unmistakably their superior, they had merely repeated the same thing, that it was too hard to explain; that he should wait until they reached the labyrinth. There, everything would be clear.

As much as the soldiers' attitude toward them wasn't friendly, it couldn't be called hostile either. The men were so unaffected and disinterested, as if they really did not care one way or another about their traveling companions.

Indiana had thought that they would probably just keep driving straight on, if the second vehicle had broken down.

Fortunately, the second vehicle did not break down, and his concerns were likely overblown, anyway, because the three statuettes, which according to Raymond were the whole reason the soldiers had come to the monastery, were still in his leather bag. He had expected that they might attempt to take them, but nothing like that had happened. The soldiers seemed satisfied when it became clear he would carry them to the labyrinth.

In the end there was nothing left to do but to continue to follow the first Land Rover. On the horizon, a cloud of dust and some two dozen small dots appeared then disappeared behind the dunes. The monks were still on their heels, and they could not afford to rest for too long. Now that they had achieved their goal at last, they wouldn't have to worry about it any longer. In the monastery they had learned that this area was off limits for the monks

— Indiana just hoped the events of last evening hadn't changed that rule. Otherwise, they would be in a real jam.

"So?" asked Finnley, his voice becoming more sharp.

"Listen to me!"

The soldiers had in fact turned to him, but nobody answered. Instead, they just stood and looked at him as if they couldn't understand why he would put such questions to them. Not for the first time, Indiana felt as if they didn't really look at the people who spoke to them, but instead looked *through* them.

“It could not be avoided, unfortunately,” one of them finally said, condescendingly and in a halting voice.

“Avoided?” Finnley repeated, having difficulty subdu-ing his rage. “Do you even know what you’re talking about, man? That was murder. Senseless murder, by the dozens.”

The soldier took it calmly.

“Please, sir. There… there was no other way. You will soon understand all this.”

“Understand? When? You said everything would be explained when we reached the labyrinth. Now we are here.

So, what?” He looked around pointedly. “I don’t see anything that looks like an explanation. Nothing at all.”

“You are getting close.” The man pointed to the top of the pyramid. “When you enter there.”

Finnley sighed. The conversation was going in circles.

His eyes followed the man’s outstretched arm.

“And what will we find there?” he asked skeptically.

“Answers. All the answers you desire.” The soldier’s head turned in Indiana’s direction. “Don’t forget the statues.”

He turned around at the same time as the other three soldiers, and again their coordinated movement caused Indiana to shiver. This shivering only increased in intensity when he looked up again at the wide open entryway. Now it the opening appeared like a dark abyss, waiting to swallow them forever.

The greatest archaeological discovery in history, the muffled phrase echoed in his thoughts. The tomb of the last god to roam the Earth!

While the soldiers grabbed kerosene lamps from the Land Rover and set out for the pyramid without so much as a further look, Finnley turned to Indiana for help. He pursed his lips, unsure how to react to the absurdity of the situation.

“Now what?” he asked, puzzled.

Indiana shrugged his shoulders as he watched the first soldier climb up to the entrance and disappear. He felt a powerful doubt, but at the same time an insatiable curiosity.

“We follow them,” he replied.

“Of course we follow them!” Raymond called from behind them. He could hardly get into the pyramid fast enough. “Now that we’re

finally here, I want to see what's in there. I want to see what my father saw!"

"What if this is just a trap?" asked Liz quietly, moving to Indiana's side.

"The entire labyrinth is likely nothing more than a single, huge trap," he reminded her, keeping his sense of humor. The second soldier climbed into the pyramid, and the third followed a moment later.

"That's not what I mean," she announced softly. "I mean the soldiers. Those men look so… so strange. For some reason, they make me nervous. What if they kill us in there?"

Indiana understood her. Similar thoughts swirled in his head.

"If they had wanted to do that, they already had ample opportunity," he said to reassure her, but really even he wasn't so sure about it. "No, they have something else planned. Something completely different. After all, it looks like they know exactly what they're doing. And who knows, maybe once we get in there, we really will find out the answer to everything."

"I'm very curious to see what this answer could look like," said Finnley, irritated.

"We'll never know unless we follow them," said Raymond. He shifted restlessly from one foot to the other.

At that moment, the fourth soldier reached the opening, paused there, looked back at them with a straight face, and then disappeared inside the pyramid. "Who knows if they'll wait for us."

"They'll wait," Indiana responded, thinking of the leather bag with the statuettes back in the Land Rover. "I'm sure of it."

He went to the car, opened the rear door and handed Liz and Finnley a couple of kerosene lamps. He decided not to bother with any other supplies for the time being.

If it turned out they needed something, they could always pick it up later. At least Indiana hoped as much.

"Wouldn't it be wiser for at least one of us to remain out here?" Finnley asked. "For security?"

Indiana nodded thoughtfully. This was not a bad idea.

He looked at Liz.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed before he could say anything, and with a violent shake of her head she raised both her hands defensively. "Not

me! Anything but that! Ten horses couldn't drag me from that pyramid, if it meant staying behind all alone!"

His gaze wandered on to Raymond, who had already run toward the pyramid and was now climbing it on all fours. Indiana didn't think anything — especially rational arguments — could stop Basil's son from descending into the labyrinth at this point. And Indiana could sympathize, as he himself had no desire to play the guard out here while the others encountered the greatest wonders of the ancient world inside. No, he was too close to the finish line to hold back now.

He turned to Finnley.

"It seems as though the honor is all yours, Sergeant."

Finnley thought for a moment, then waved it off.

"Okay, let's forget it."

While he, Liz and Raymond went to the pyramid, Indiana took his bag from the car and stopped when he felt the contours of the three statuettes under the leather. He heard the voice of the dying old monk echoing in his head: *It… it must not come to be. The last chamber must not be opened. You must make sure…* Indiana gulped as he remembered the words, coughed out with the last of his strength. Did he really know the truth of this place? *Promise me, American! You must…*

"Come on, already, Dr. Jones!" he heard Raymond's urgent voice. "What are you waiting for?"

He was startled. Finnley, Liz and Raymond were already up in the opening, and the latter punctuated his call with an excited wave.

"The soldiers have already gone down," Basil's son added impatiently. "Come on! We need to stay behind them, or we'll get lost."

Indiana pulled himself together and chased away the thoughts of the old monk, but not without a guilty conscience. To compensate, he slammed the rear door much more powerfully than necessary, before slinging the bag across his shoulder and climbing up to the entrance.

"Well, finally," Raymond said as he joined them.

Behind the opening was a small room with bare walls, leading to a stone spiral staircase that sank deep down into the pyramid. When Indiana looked down, he saw dim light and heard low and steady steps. The soldiers couldn't be too far ahead. Finnley and Liz had lit their lamps, and after one last look out at the deep purple of the

evening sky on the horizon, they followed the soldiers into the belly of the pyramid.

Indiana went ahead with Finnley, feeling a bit like a curious rabbit inspecting the wide-open jaws of a dozing crocodile. An inner voice warned him not to venture even one step deeper, but he simply ignored it — something he had practiced over and over again in recent years.

It took a few minutes before they caught up with the soldiers. The men did not react to them in the least, but continued on in silence. Step by step. Landing by landing.

Turn by turn. Their silence was so contagious that even Raymond kept his mouth shut. He seemed completely consumed by the thought of following in the footsteps of his famous father. Indiana made a mental note to look out for him. Perhaps in his enthusiasm he would run straight into trouble.

As they went deeper, Indiana looked carefully at the bare walls, the ceiling and the stairs. He saw nothing that appeared to be a trap. The entire pyramid seemed to have been built solely for the purpose of housing the endless staircase that led to the labyrinth. This correlated with the records in Basil's notebook. If there was something out there, though, Indiana comforted himself with the thought that it would catch the four soldiers first. They seemed thoroughly unconcerned about traps. And in fact, they would know if there were cause for worry, because it was not their first time in this structure, after all.

Indiana wondered where they would camp. In the next-to-last chamber? In that case, a mile-long march lay before them. Assuming, of course, that the soldiers knew precisely the way through the labyrinth. Or that — and this thought electrified him — they had the drawing of the Knossos mosaic with him, the one the professor had used.

He refrained from asking about it, however. He suspected that he wouldn't get an answer, anyway. Not a satisfying one, in any case.

Finally, the stairs ended in a spacious hall, with a large, open portal waiting at the opposite end. As unadorned as their way had been so far, the sight that now presented itself to their eyes was so overwhelming that they involuntarily slowed their feet on the last few steps to stare forward in amazement. All the walls and even the ceiling were covered with huge hieroglyphic tablets, splendid murals,

and carved ornaments, and along the side walls on their right and left were two long rows of stately, stone statues, each weighing several tons, each a representation of a standing man with a hawk's head. It was a sight that would get any archaeologist's heart pounding. The soldiers, however, responded coolly. They proceeded calmly, crossing the hall and stopping at the opposite end facing the open portal, which stood at least twice as tall as a man. It seemed as if they had reached their destination and were now waiting for something.

As he hesitantly approached the men, Indiana noticed the torches hanging from brackets in the walls, casting a flickering light around the hall. It took a while before he finally realized the importance of this discovery.

Burning torches! Torches, without whose light their eyes could not have beheld the splendor of the entire hall, because the illumination provided by their kerosene lamps was too low. And most importantly, the torches had been burning as they entered the hall with the soldiers! Why hadn't he noticed it sooner?

If you didn't believe that these torches could have burned continuously without interruption since the soldiers had last been here — and Indiana did not — it could only mean one thing: there had to be other people down here.

Soldiers? Monks? Indiana looked around frantically, but saw no one.

His eyes gazed through the open portal into an even larger hall beyond. Here again, the walls were covered with decorative engravings. The room was also decorated with several oversized, geometric, stone formations: cuboids, pyramids, columns, cubes. It looked like the building block set of a giant baby. However, the bleached bones and skulls that covered the floor in several places made it clear that what they were dealing with was anything but a game.

The first chamber! Indiana thought. It had to be. The first chamber of a total of one thousand, five hundred!

"All right!" said Finnley, turning to the four soldiers.

He tried to act unimpressed by the magnificent surroundings. "Are you quite satisfied? We have followed you this far. And? Where do we go from here?"

One of the men turned to him. "Nowhere."

“Nowhere?” Finnley raised one of his eyebrows, a habit of his in such cases. “What does that mean?”

“That we are at our destination,” said the soldier, undisturbed.

Finnley looked as if he was trying hard not to throttle the man. Probably it was only the machine gun that prevented him from doing so. He was opening his mouth to voice a sharply worded reply, but forgot what he was saying when they heard a sudden noise off to the side, among the statues.

He spun around, as did Indiana, Raymond, and Liz, and like them, he immediately froze.

There were no other soldiers between the statues, and no monks in orange robes, with spears and swords in their hands. No, there was only one person. But even if the entire German Army had surfaced along with their leader, it could not have been more surprising than the sight of this man.

The person was moving slowly toward them, with a slight limp — a somewhat portly, jovial-looking man in a plaid tweed jacket, with a neat beard, bright clear eyes behind round spectacles, and a mischievous smile on his lips.

Indiana stared at him, stunned, and could not believe his eyes.

Basil Smith!

Basil Smith spread his arms jovially.

“Now why would you just stand there in silence? Are you at a loss for words? Liz! Raymond! Are you all right?

Is this any way to greet your father?”

“Father…?” was the incredulous word that passed through Liz’s lips. “You… you’re alive…?”

He laughed comfortably.

“Of course I’m alive. But why wouldn’t I be? Come, my daughter, let me give you a hug!” He walked over to Liz and held her close. “I am glad that you came along too. Now you will be able to share my greatest triumph with me.”

She hung in his arms without resistance, and seemed barely able to comprehend that she was not dealing with a spirit, a ghost, or a hallucination, but with her father, made of flesh and blood.

He released her and turned to Raymond.

“Raymond!” he said with a proud, appreciative nod. “I knew that you would find the way, and you did not disappoint.”

It seemed to be the highest praise Raymond could ever get from his father. His chest promptly swelled.

Smith turned to Indiana, who stood there stunned, and was only able to close his gaping mouth with much effort.

Still smiling, the professor put both hands on his shoulders in a fatherly gesture.

“Henry Jones,” he said in a solemn voice. “The best student I ever had. I am glad that you came to make good on your promise. How long ago was it? Fifteen years?”

“Sixteen,” Indiana replied automatically.

“Sixteen, oh yeah, right. Anyway — I knew I could count on you. None other than you could have been able to bring me what I needed to complete my triumph.” He looked at the leather pouch that hung at Indiana’s shoulder. “And I see you’ve brought the three statues, in fact.

I’m proud of you, Henry, really. Now we are able to open it, the last door. And you’ll be here by my side.”

Indiana just stared at him, trying to sort his thoughts, which buzzed around wildly. He wasn’t sure what to make of it. He should rejoice at seeing the professor alive, but instead he felt only uncertainty, and an increasing unease.

Smith’s manner — yes, that was the right word — seemed strange, different. It was a change that stemmed not just from the sixteen-year absence. His inner voice told him emphatically to be on guard. He noted that none of the four soldiers had responded to Basil’s appearance. They just stood there like obedient dogs, waiting for the next order from their master.

The professor winked at him slyly, as if he knew exactly where his thoughts were, and then turned to Finnley.

“You must be Sergeant Finnley,” he noted with an appraising look. “I am glad to meet you, sir. You’ve been a big help, believe me. Without you, all this would have taken much longer.”

Sergeant Finnley looked at the professor with incalculable distrust. He seemed to have the same thoughts as Indiana.

“Glad to hear that,” said Finnley, reservedly. “But I don’t understand…”

“You will, Sergeant,” Smith interrupted. “Believe me, you’ll understand it yet.” He looked around, breathing deeply and rubbing

his hands together. “I think now that we are all together, we shouldn’t waste any more time; remember, we have work to finish.”

Liz shook her head in confusion.

“Father, I…” she stammered. “I do not understand.

How is this possible? We thought you were dead. We even found your dead body, and we were there when you were buried. You… you cannot imagine how that felt. And then to have you just show up…”

“Oh yes, the funeral,” Smith said in a casual tone, as if it were but an unimportant trifle. He gave his daughter a reassuring smile. “It was an unfortunate necessity, to pretend. Forgive me, but there’s nothing else I could do.

The monks were too hot on my heels, and it was the only way to shake them. Of course, I never lay in that coffin…”

Indiana raised his eyebrows. Of course! Now that he recalled the scene, he realized what had seemed so strange at the funeral! The coffin! It had been too light. If a man were in it, especially one with the weight of the professor, it would not have been so easy to lower it into the open grave.

“That’s impossible,” Finnley said firmly. “You were examined, repeatedly. You were dead. There was no doubt about it.”

Smith gave him a pitying look.

“Do you know of the powers that this labyrinth can be-stow?” he cried. “What do you know of the ancient forces that reside in this structure? What you call impossible, I can conjure with no more than a snap of the fingers. And that’s only the smallest part of my new skills.” A challenging grin appeared on his face. “You don’t believe me, Sergeant? No? Perhaps you want to see a demonstration?

Is that it?” Before Finnley could reply, he pointed to the four soldiers. “How should we begin? Perhaps with a few gymnastic exercises?”

No sooner had he uttered the last word, than the soldiers stretched out their machine guns with both arms.

The next moment they began squats, one after another, with straight faces. Again they moved synchronously, like puppets hanging on the same string of an invisible pup-peteer.

Indiana realized instinctively that this comparison was probably not so far removed from the reality. Dismayed, he stared at the men, as did Finnley and Liz, but Raymond was still so happy, thinking that everything was all right

— the bliss of ignorance.

"Well, Sergeant," Smith asked, with the pride of a child showing his friends a new toy, "what do you think?"

"I…"

"Oh, you're still not convinced?" Smith interrupted.

"Well, you're right, these athletic exercises are a bit boring in the long run. How about a little dance, instead? Perhaps the Kazachok? Do you like Russian dances, Sergeant?"

He clapped his hands, and immediately the soldiers went into a crouch, their arms folded across their chests, and began to stretch one of their legs, while bouncing on the opposite foot, to the beat of an inaudible clock. It was an strenuous exercise, one even the best trained dancers could only maintain for a minute at most, but the soldiers did not seem to know exhaustion. Instead, without stopping, they formed a circle and danced around Indiana and the others.

The sight sent a chill down Indiana's spine. He felt it too in Liz's desperate, pleading look. For her it was all the more terrible — because the man who forced the soldiers to perform this nonsensical hopping, watching them with glittering eyes, was her father.

But — was it really her father? Other than the appearance, he had nothing in common with the man Indiana knew.

"Stop it, Smith!" Finnley exclaimed. "That's enough now."

"Stop?" Smith chuckled. "But why? Don't you find it amusing?"

"No, absolutely not. Leave those men alone! You'll kill them!"

"So what? Who would complain? Now that I have the statues, they are useless to me anyway. Their task is done.

If I like their dancing, they can dance until they drop dead from exhaustion." He chuckled again, as if he found the idea a happy one, and Indiana felt something shatter in not only him but also Liz. "Maybe we should see how long they can last. What do you think, Sergeant? Five hours?

Ten hours? These men are extremely tough, I can tell you.

Good British training. But I forgot — you know all about that."

Finnley's cheek muscles twitched.

"You… you monster!" he countered with difficulty, and in sudden recognition, he added: "It was you who forced the men slaughter the monks so ruthlessly! You are responsible for the massacre at the monastery!"

Basil Smith accepted it with a shrug.

“It was inevitable, unfortunately. It was necessary.” Indiana noticed that these were exactly the same words he had heard from the soldiers after their arrival. The professor grinned at Finnley, pointing to the bouncing men around them. “Maybe you would like to join in this dance, Sergeant? Who knows, maybe you are a better dancer than you think. Come, do me a favor, won’t you?”

Indiana was about to throw himself at Basil, in order to put an end to this madness, but something stopped him.

Finnley, though, had run out of patience. He rushed at the professor in long strides, his fists in the air, ready to strike.

He managed three paces, then stopped abruptly, as if someone had dealt him a blow to the abdomen. His face contorted into a pained grimace and turned ashen, and as he slowly sank to his knees, he grabbed his chest with both hands, where his heart was.

“That was stupid, Sergeant,” Basil chided. “Very stupid.”

Finnley watched the professor with bulging eyes. His mouth opened, but a strangled groan was all that come to his lips, and Indiana watch horrified as he tried in vain to get air into his lungs.

“Father!” Liz cried. She took one step toward him, but seemed unable to follow it with a second. “What are you doing? Stop it! Please! Stop it!”

He ignored her, and instead looked at the sergeant, toppled over and writhing convulsively on the floor, with all the sensitivity of an insect collector who had just impaled a butterfly and was drowning it in formic acid.

Indiana knew that he could not wait any longer if he wanted to save Finnley. But what could he do? Also lunge at the professor? And end up the same as Finnley?

He glanced quickly at the soldiers. Perhaps he could manage to wrestle a machine gun from one of them, to turn the tables on their tormentor. At that thought, he saw that the men had surprisingly stopped their grotesque dance, and now stood with drooping shoulders and blank faces, as if waiting for further instructions.

Wait a minute! Hadn’t they been dancing tediously at the moment Basil Smith turned his attention to Finnley?

Did that mean that the professor was able to focus his un-canny abilities on just one thing? Was that his weak point?

Finnley’s spasmodic movements became weaker and weaker. Indiana had no other choice. He had to try it.

So he pushed himself toward the professor.

Basil's head snapped around to meet him. The child-like smile on his face had washed away.

"Don't try it!" Basil hissed dangerously. He pointed his index finger pointed at Indiana's chest as a warning. "Let it be, Henry! I wouldn't like what I would have to do to you."

Indiana paused, startled. He felt that the threat was serious. At least Finnley's body had stopped twitching, and relieved, he heard the sergeant panting and gasping, as air once again filled his lungs.

Basil Smith refrained from dealing with him further.

He made a dismissive gesture, as if he had lost interest in this game.

"We have no more time to waste," he said, annoyed.

"We must turn to more important things."

He looked to Raymond, who stood undecided, not yet understanding exactly what was going on here, then turned his gaze to Liz.

She stared at her father with contempt.

"What has happened to you?" she cried bitterly. "Do you feel nothing, playing with the lives of other people?

Could you care any less about all the dead people in the monastery?"

Against Indiana's expectations, he did not shout, but instead showed her a mild and indulgent smile — the smile found on all loving fathers when they tell their offspring something that they are not yet mature enough to understand.

"They are not important," he said gently. "But you will understand that yet, believe me."

"Understand?" she repeated in disgust. "There's nothing to understand."

"Yes, there is," he corrected her. "Once you are sitting with me by the side of a god incarnate, then you will think like me."

He walked up to her, laying a comforting hand on her shoulder, but she stepped back, withdrawing from the contact.

"Don't touch me!" she threatened him. "I want nothing more to do with you! If you want something from me, you'll have to force me, like you did with him." She pointed to Finnley, who rose to his feet with Indiana's help.

The sergeant still had terror written on his face.

For a moment Basil Smith remained irresolute, then he again lowered his hand. He took a deep breath, and seam-lessly resumed his enterprising and cheerful disposition, as if nothing had happened between them.

“Let’s go, at last. You guys must certainly be excited to see what is hidden in the final chamber.” He stared at Indiana with shining eyes. “Imagine, Henry, the tomb of the last god on earth! This is a greater find than you could imagine in even your wildest dreams, right?”

“Indeed,” he answered cautiously. It was wiser not to provoke Basil. “It’s a fascinating idea.”

“And it’s not just a tomb,” the professor added. “We will see the god resurrected! What do you think, how many of our colleagues would give everything just to be here?”

Indiana doubted that anyone in the world would willingly change places with them. But he did not say so.

Smith had only meant it as a rhetorical question.

“How long will it take for us to reach the last chamber?”

he asked, to keep the professor happy. Who knew how long he would remain in this reasonable mood? “The path is many miles long, isn’t it?”

Basil looked at him, shaking his head.

“Henry, you disappoint me. Think it over! Do you think that the old priests would have gone through the entire labyrinth every time they wanted to enter the last chamber? That they would always take the risk of running into their own traps? Well?”

He went up to Indiana and patted him encouragingly on the cheek, as if with an inattentive student striving for the correct answer. Indiana endured it without a murmur.

“A secret passage?” he asked.

“Right,” Smith acknowledged in satisfaction. “A secret passage. It goes from here, the entrance, directly to the last chamber. For security reasons, it can only be opened from there.” He laughed. “Unless you have powers like me. Come on, I’ll show you!”

He went to one of the walls and stood there with his arms outstretched. Like Moses parting the Red Sea, Indiana thought. It was no sea that parted, but a wall, and at a spot where Indiana never would have thought there could be a passage. Two stone blocks creaked apart, until they revealed an opening through which their Land Rover would fit with ease.

“Voilà!” exclaimed Basil Smith, happily, and he pointed invitingly to the passage. “Please, after you.”

Indiana saw that there was no sense in refusing him.

Flanked by the soldiers, they were joined by the professor, who led them into the underground passage. They had hardly entered when the heavy stone blocks slid back together behind them. Since there were no torches in the hallway, they had to be content with the light from their kerosene lamps.

Indiana felt a gentle touch on the shoulder. It was Liz. She looked into his eyes and pointed furtively at Basil Smith, who had gone on ahead a few steps.

“That’s not my father!” she whispered to him, shaken.

“That is a monster, not my father!”

“I can’t imagine how you must feel!” he replied softly.

“But under the circumstances, try to pull yourself together.

Don’t upset him, and leave everything to me. I’ll think of something.”

She did not look particularly convinced, but he could not expect her to. He ran up to Basil.

“May I ask you a question, professor?”

“Sure, Henry,” he said generously. “Ask away. After all, curiosity is the driving force behind every good archaeologist.”

“If you have such tremendous power, why didn’t you just take the Horus statues yourself?”

“I would have loved to. It would have saved me a lot of time. But unfortunately I am not allowed to touch the figures. It’s a type of security mechanism. I discovered it in an inscription in the entrance hall to the last chamber.

Unfortunately, after I had already received the consecration of Horus.”

The consecration of Horus! That must have been how Smith had gained his abilities, and lost his mind.

“And the soldiers?”

“No, by that time they were already my subjects. And so they were out, too. The Horus statues had to be brought by someone who was completely clueless.” He nodded thoughtfully. “I expected that Raymond and Liz would be looking for me, but I wasn’t sure if they could do it alone.

Then I found out that you were supporting them, and I had no more worries about it. I knew that there was no better man than you for this job. Once you found my trail, you wouldn't let up until you had reached the labyrinth."

He gave Indiana a jovial smile. "And sure enough, you did not disappoint."

With dismay, Indiana saw that he had been nothing more than a pawn on a chessboard all this time. Basil Smith's chessboard! And he hadn't suspected a thing. Instead, he just blindly followed the moves that had been prescribed him.

"Then why did you break into the National Museum?"

inquired Finnley, who had been listening to their conversation timidly from behind them. "It contradicts what you just said! Why would you attempt to grab the statue located there?"

Basil turned while he continued walking and caught the sergeant with a contemptuous glance.

"Did the army teach you so little of tactical thinking?"

he asked condescendingly. "I'd have thought you might have a little more sense. Of course, I never intended to steal the real figure of Horus. From the very start, I went there only to grab the copy, to make you aware of the importance of these figures." He paused. "I knew that the monks had been awakened, and some were hot on my heels. This was also a good opportunity to rid myself of those following me. Who would hunt an already dead man? Then I also had to get my notebook into your hands so that you would know where to look for the other two statues of Horus, and to get you to the labyrinth." He let out a smug laugh. "It worked out well, right?"

Indiana did not answer. He had to admit that it had been a brilliant move. Basil Smith had pushed his pawn to E5, while his queen cleared the path for the next move to checkmate. It warned him to be on guard all the more.

The professor might have gone insane, but his brain was awesome, just as Indiana had known from before.

And then there was another point. Smith had mentioned that he was not allowed to touch the statues of Horus. Was this perhaps the chance to disable the professor?

Or at least to prevent the last chamber from being opened?

Indiana's desire to unravel the mystery and see the unseen had now been satisfied. At all costs, he had to stop the chamber from

being opened.

Especially by a madman with supernatural powers!

After five hundred yards, the path ended in a rectangular hall, and as soon as they entered, the passage closed behind them, as if by magic. However, Indiana saw a statue of a goat had moved in front of the opening, alongside a rather prominent segment of wall. That could be the de-vice that opened the secret passage. An observation that could prove useful later.

On the right was a doorway that opened into a hall that almost perfectly matched the entrance hall. Beyond that, they could see another great hall, one whose floor was covered by a number of bridges. No doubt about it — this would be the one-thousand-five-hundredth chamber. On their left was another doorway in the wall, but unlike the first, it was closed.

"Yes, this is the entrance to the last chamber," said Basil, who had followed Indiana's eyes. "And you see the three small holes in the wall next to it? That's where the three statues of Horus can be used." He took a few steps toward the door and looked longingly at the closed stone surface. Then he turned around, spread his arms and announced in a solemn voice: "We must begin immediately.

I have waited too long for this moment. And you, Henry, have the privilege of using the statues. I hope you can appreciate what a great privilege you have been given. You will be the one to resurrect Horus!"

Indiana was alarmed. He was expecting to have more time. Time for him to come up with something. A glance at Basil confirmed that the professor would accept no further delay. On the contrary, with every second that passed, his bearded face darkened a shade.

"What is it, Henry?" asked Basil, his voice a touch sharper. "Will you not do it?"

Indiana made a conciliatory gesture.

"All right, all right. I'm coming."

Basil's face relaxed as he walked forward slowly, while reaching into his bag and stroking the different figures with his hand. He hoped desperately that he wasn't making a mistake.

"Dr. Jones!" shouted Liz in terror. "You're not really going to go through with it? You mustn't!"

He turned around as he pulled one of the Horus statues out of the bag. His gaze met that of Finnley, then he closed his eyelids together

a little and glanced for two tenths of a second at the two soldiers who were standing on either side of him. Hopefully the sergeant understood!

Finnley nodded imperceptibly. He had understood.

"I'm just doing what must be done," Indiana replied to Liz's plea, and watched with satisfaction as Basil Smith responded with a broad, smug grin.

Indiana went on toward the doorway, and while he pretended as if he was interested in only the three small holes in the wall, he memorized the locations of one of the other two soldiers. It would all have to happen very quickly.

His hand gripped the Horus statuette, and then, as he passed only two or three yards away from Basil Smith, he suddenly turned and threw it at him, with such rapid motion that the professor would not be able to escape its trajectory.

He didn't, but he raised his arm upward quickly, as if he had anticipated Indiana's attack, and casually plucked the statue from the air.

He laughed loudly as Indiana looked on incredulously.

"I should have perhaps clarified: the prohibition against touching the statues only applies outside the labyrinth.

Forgive me this small oversight. But I was curious as to whose side you were on, Henry. Now I know."

Indiana stood as if petrified. He had staked everything on one card — and it had been played. Basil Smith had easily hit him with his trump card. It was all too clear to Indiana what that meant, and the thought of what had happened to Finnley made him shudder.

"It's too bad, Henry, a real shame. We could have had a good time." He shook his head sadly and sighed, like a father who was disappointed by his child. "Well, you decided against it. Actually, I should punish you right here, but I can wait a while longer. After all, you procured the Horus statues for me. So you should still be allowed to witness the great moment."

He stretched out a demanding hand to Indiana.

"Come on, Henry, give me the two other statues. I can use them myself."

Indiana took a deep breath. No, he wouldn't do it, not voluntarily! And if he couldn't overpower the professor with wits, then perhaps he could with what he employed now: brute force!

He started out with a wild swing, as soon as Smith was within reach, but the professor escaped the blow with a skip to the side. Indiana immediately followed with two quick jabs, without landing a hit, and his kick went into the void.

Basil laughed, as if demonstrating his superiority were incredibly fun.

“Give it up, Henry! You won’t hit me. I know what you’re going to do at the same moment as you do.”

It made Indiana all the more furious. He tried a new tactic. A confused attempt to throw his whole body at him.

Without any result. He felt his movements slow.

Breathing heavily, he paused. What was it the professor had just said? He knew what he was going to do at the same moment Indiana knew? Of course, that was it.

He lunged for Smith, concentrating on the thought of kicking his legs out from under him, and at the same moment slammed him in the chin with a sharp uppercut.

Basil’s glasses flew off in an arc. With boundless astonishment, the professor stared at Indiana, who was no less surprised that his trick had actually worked, and then he slumped to the ground like a limp sack.

Indiana turned around quickly, aware that the battle was far from won. But the four soldiers made no attempt to intervene. Quite the contrary. Now that their psychic ruler had been disabled, they too fell to the ground and remained motionless.

Indiana allowed himself an exhausted breath.

Liz came up to him, and her eyes shuttling back and forth between him and the figure of her father.

“That… that was great!” she cried.

“Let’s not get ahead of ourselves!” he warned. “As soon as he regains consciousness, we’ll be in the same boat as before. And I don’t think I can surprise him again.”

She winced.

“Right. But what should we do?”

Indiana pressed his lips together. That was precisely the question: What should they do? He couldn’t hit the professor on the head every five minutes, as a precaution.

Could they kill him? Indiana shook his head.

“There’s a first aid kit in our equipment back at the car,” announced Finnley, apparently also uncomfortable with the idea of killing Basil Smith, in spite of the immense threat he posed. For Indiana, it was a further confirmation that he had not misjudged the sergeant. “If I’m not mistaken, there is also a bottle of chloroform. So we could keep him unconscious, for now.”

Indiana nodded. A good idea. Maybe they could keep Basil Smith stunned until they could get him to a hospital in Luxor. Maybe there they could find a couple of good doctors who could help him. Whether he would ever again be his old self — Indiana doubted it. Nevertheless, they couldn’t leave any stone unturned. After all, he had promised Basil in Yucatan that he’d someday pay him back for saving his life.

He tore himself away from his thoughts. Time was short. Literally every second counted.

He pointed to the closed portal through which they had entered the hall.

“Sergeant, you see the protruding wall segment there?”

Finnley looked in that direction and nodded silently.

“The trigger for the passage should be over there. You’d better get the chloroform. We’ll wait for you here.”

“All right.” Finnley was on his way.

Indiana made sure with a quick glance that Smith was still unconscious.

“And hurry up!” he added. “Raymond, collect the soldiers’ weapons, so that we…”

He stopped when he saw that Raymond had already taken one of the machine guns, and realized with confusion that Basil’s son had aimed it at them.

“What the…?”

“Don’t move!” exclaimed Raymond sharply, and on his baby face was a grim determination. “Now I decide what we’re going to do! Come on, hands up!” The barrel of his gun waved in Finnley’s direction. “That goes for you too, Sergeant. Don’t force me to shoot.”

Finnley, who had just stretched out his hand to press the trigger mechanism, turned and slowly raised his hands, stunned.

“Raymond!” he cried. “Think about what you’re doing!”

“You can be sure — I know exactly what I’m doing!”

He pointed the barrel of the machine gun to the corner of the room. “Come on, all of you over there. And stay away from my father.”

Indiana shook his head. It couldn’t be true! What had gotten into Raymond?

“Raymond!” formulated Indiana urgently. “You can’t do this. You don’t seem to understand what you’re…”

“Me?” exclaimed Basil’s son, cutting him off. “Oh no!

You are the one who doesn’t understand, Dr. Jones! We were never playing on the same team. I was on my father’s side this whole time. Only you never noticed it.”

Indiana looked at him, confused.

“What do you mean?”

“You still don’t get it?” asked Raymond. His laughter was colder than Indiana had thought possible. “Well, I’ll explain it to you. I was never the hapless son, desperately looking for his father. I had already been here once before, but I had to play the role of the naive little boy, so you would do what we wanted. And all of you fell for it.” A satisfied smile crept across his face. “Just like I promised my father. My only job was to make sure that you got to the labyrinth. It was so easy. Not even Liz suspected anything.”

“Yes, but…” Liz began, confused. “Why?”

“Why? It’s very simple. I was here when my father found the labyrinth. And when he stood here, before the last chamber, and received the consecration of Horus.”

Finnley shook his head.

“I never saw a word about it,” he argued.

“Of course you didn’t. Ultimately, we ensured that all related documentation was destroyed.”

“Then you were the one who set fire to the barracks?”

Raymond pointed to the soldiers, lying motionless on the ground just like Basil Smith.

“No, we had people for that type of work. Meanwhile, I traveled to Istanbul to inform Dr. Jones. It was clear that he was the best man to find the statues. When I arrived in Istanbul, I immediately sent a telegram to Washington.”

He looked at his sister. “I hadn’t planned for you to show up in Istanbul, too. But once you did, I persuaded you to give me an

identical message. In reality, of course, the telegram had already been sent."

Indiana understood. He remembered that Raymond had admitted to being in Istanbul earlier than Liz. Though he hadn't come from England, but from Egypt. Directly from this site. In retrospect, he noticed the inconsistencies in Raymond's story. Unfortunately, he hadn't thought about it earlier. A mistake, as it turned out now.

Liz, shaken, looked at her brother.

"You mean all this time, you were just using me as a puppet?"

"Yes," Raymond replied. "If Dr. Jones hadn't come, I would have used you to get the statues. But fortunately that wasn't necessary."

Liz looked at her brother with contempt and took a few steps toward him, as if there were no machine gun held menacingly in his hands.

"Stop, Liz!" he warned. "I don't want to do anything to you."

"What could you do to me, worse than what you've already done," she replied calmly, and moved toward him.

"You're the meanest, most deceitful, detestable…"

"Liz, please!" he said, almost begging, and shook machine gun. "Don't come any closer. Don't do it. Otherwise…?"

Liz heard him, but continued on regardless. She was just four or five feet from her brother when suddenly a shot rang out.

While a fine wisp of smoke curled from the machine gun barrel, Liz stumbled back a foot or two, staring at the blood that had appeared on her upper arm. She didn't seem to feel the pain. Her eyes wandered to her brother in confusion.

"I… I…," Raymond stammered, for a moment seeming like the nervous and confused kid Indiana knew, before he stood up straight. "I warned you, Liz!" he cried in his defense. "But you wouldn't listen." He waved the gun in Indiana's direction. "Stay still, Dr. Jones. I'll shoot!

Believe me, I'll do it."

"Take it easy, Raymond!" he shouted, waving the handkerchief that he had pulled from his pocket. "Your sister's arm has to be bandaged. Or do you want her to bleed to death?"

Raymond allowed him to approach Liz, who had begun to wobble. Indiana carefully wrapped the bleeding wound and led Liz over to Finnley, who was waiting in the corner.

“He shot me,” Liz whispered, almost soundlessly. “He actually shot me.”

Indiana put his arm around her shoulders, without feeling that it could provide her much comfort.

“He’s not himself. Just like your father.” He looked in Raymond’s direction. “Are you happy now? Is this what you wanted?”

Raymond looked at him impassively. His brief moment of uncertainty seemed to have completely vanished.

“Happy?” he asked. He smiled. “Not as happy as I’ll be when the last chamber is opened.”

* * *

All in all, nearly five minutes passed before Basil Smith came to. To Indiana, it had seemed like five hours. In that time he had thought through literally hundreds of ideas on how this seemingly hopeless situation might end in their escape after all. Each new idea was more ludicrous than the previous — and as unworkable as the next. No matter what plans he concocted, there was always something that got in the way — and it was usually the same thing: the weapon in Raymond’s hand, unflinchingly pointed at Finnley and him.

Under normal circumstances, Indiana would have risked attacking him anyway. A weapon was only as dangerous as the man who held it, and normally Raymond would have no idea how hard it could be to shoot a man, especially a man he knew. But these were not normal circumstances. Raymond would not hesitate to use his weapon.

If he hadn’t hesitated to shoot *his own sister*, he certainly wouldn’t hesitate to shoot Indiana and Finnley. And even if that weren’t true — Indiana still wasn’t sure he could defeat Raymond. The eerie sensation he’d felt the moment when they entered the labyrinth had solidified into a near-certainty. This was not just a creepy labyrinth of one thousand, five hundred chambers. It was a place that changed people. And not for the better.

While they waited for either Basil Smith to wake or a miracle to save them, Liz’s condition rapidly began to de-teriorate. The wound in her arm wasn’t even that bad —

the bullet had passed straight through, and hadn’t made contact with the bone — but it was certainly very painful.

Her initial shock had gradually subsided. Liz's face lost all its color, and it glistened with sweat. Even before her father awoke, she had a slight fever and felt clammy to the touch. Her eyes began to cloud over. Slowly, Indiana became seriously worried about her.

"She needs a doctor," he said, turning to Raymond. He had anticipated the answer, but was somehow still deeply disappointed when Raymond just smiled contemptuously.

Liz was right: this was not her brother. Any more than Basil was still her father.

"It's just a scratch," Raymond replied. "Don't worry.

She's damn tough."

"She could die," Indiana said — without exaggeration.

Though the gunshot wound was not particularly bad, Indiana had seen people die from minor injuries.

"I doubt it," Raymond said coldly. "And even if she did — she will rise again. Do you still not understand the powers you have awakened?"

At least Indiana understood that he was dealing with someone who was obviously insane. He almost didn't know which was worse — his horror at the terrible change that Raymond had undergone, or the anger he directed at himself, that he'd allowed his supposed "friend" get the better of him.

He did not get to respond. Basil Smith began moaning, and at virtually the same moment the soldiers awakened from their eerie sleep, which had enveloped them when Indiana struck Basil. Raymond lowered his weapon and returned it to the soldier from whom he had taken it. Then he went over to his father and knelt beside him on the floor.

He made no attempt to help him up, or even touch him.

Indiana had the feeling that this observation was somehow important. He noted it for later.

Basil rose unsteadily. He was still dazed. Indiana was almost certain that it wasn't because of the uppercut he had given him. Without giving Indiana, Finnley, or even his daughter so much as a glance, he got up and walked slowly toward the doorway.

"Basil!" Indiana shouted, not out of despair, but instead because he had reached the limits of his self-control.

"No! Don't do it!"

Of course, Basil did not respond. For a moment, Indiana considered pouncing on him, not caring whether the soldiers would then shoot him. A quick death by bullets would probably be better than what awaited him when Smith took over their minds. But the moment passed, and then it was too late — Basil had reached the site and placed the statues, not with ceremonial, slow movements, but quickly and accurately.

When he had placed the last statue in its niche, there was a sharp, reverberating crack so loud that Indiana almost found it painful. A vibration started in the floor, quickly growing stronger and stronger until the whole hall seemed to rock back and forth. Dust trickled down from the ceiling in gray clouds, and a couple chunks of stone fell noisily to the floor.

And then the massive stone door began to open, grind-ing strangely. The movement was very slow, and it was accompanied by a strong vibration that Indiana took as a sure indication that the door had not been opened in ages. Instead of the expected darkness, there was a pale, unearthly light, of a color impossible to describe, pouring through the gradually widening gap.

A shiver ran down Indiana's spine. The light! He thought he could actually feel it on his skin, and, like the color, the feeling could not be described in any human language. The light was... and Indiana knew the very idea sounded insane, but it felt... old. Much older than this place, older even than the world. And if meant that the breath of the ancients was involved, it was clearly a *warning*.

"Basil, no!" Indiana said again, though he had hardly expected Smith to look back at him. His face had an almost transcendent expression. His eyes burned with a fa-natical fire that alarmed Indiana perhaps more than anything else. "Don't do it! You don't know what you're doing!"

"Oh yes," said Basil. "For the first time in my life, I really do know what I'm doing, Henry." He pointed into the light. "My destiny is in there. There and nowhere else."

"No, Basil," Indiana whispered. "There is nothing for you there. Only death. Or something worse."

He had spoken so softly that Basil hadn't been able to hear his words. Raymond was already following his father.

He turned around and looked thoughtfully at Indiana for a second. Then he jerked himself back toward the portal, proceeding

with quick steps. But before he reached it, his father raised his hand, gesturing for him to stop.

Basil moved slowly into the light. In the background of the last hall, on the other side of the gate, Indiana believed he could see something like a huge rectangular block, an unadorned sarcophagus of immense dimensions. Indiana caught only a glimpse into the hall, because what happened to Basil next claimed his entire attention.

Even so, he could hardly see anything. Indiana wasn't even sure that whatever filled the hall was really light.

Basil's form blurred as he dove into the brightness. A cold light traced his outline, triggered at the same time. The effect was startling, eerie and fascinating.

And it wasn't just an optical illusion.

Indiana's eyes widened in disbelief as he saw Basil begin to change. In the first second, he wasn't sure if what he saw was real, or if it was just a trick of the light and his overwrought imagination. Then it became increasingly clear that something was happening to Basil's head.

It was *changing*. Its outline vanished. His head swayed and shook, moving in a horrifying way, as if the bones under his skin had broken into a thousand pieces, each filled with its own sinister life. For a second, Indiana's gaze broke away from Basil's shape and drifted over to the three hollows next to the doorway, where Basil had placed the statuettes. The eerie light flickered too in the square holes in the wall, seemingly appearing out of nowhere. The light in the frontmost niche grew dark…

"What… what's going on?" Finnley whispered. Indiana had almost forgotten about him. His voice was shrill and had a hysterical tone, indicating to Indiana how close he was to finally losing control.

Basil had stopped. He staggered. Groaning, he raised his hands to his head, but the shaking did not end. The change was now becoming increasingly clear, and he walked ever faster. In just seconds, his head had become a hideous, misshapen, swollen thing of which there was nothing human.

"My God, Father!" Raymond gasped. "What is happening to you?"

Basil hesitated. He made no further sound. Somehow, that made his strange metamorphosis even worse.

"Father?" Raymond called again. Reluctantly, he moved toward him, but stopped immediately. Indiana could see how much he was

torn between his fear for his father and his horror at the gruesome events. Basil's face seemed to boil. Something was moving under his skin, something was taken shape —

And then it was clear to Indiana.

It was a hawk. Basil's head, which had lost all resemblance to that of a man, started *to take on the shape of a hawk's*!

Indiana caught his breath, as he realized the consequence of this notion. Horus was not in the stone sarcophagus. His body was not preserved in the last chamber, waiting to rise again. It was the spirit, the essence, the soul — whatever you wanted to call it — of this ancient, god-like creature that had lived on somehow, perhaps in the light, waiting for someone to come and bring it a body, which it needed to finally come back to life.

Basil staggered. His head had been almost completely transformed into that of a hawk, but his eyes were still a man's. His eyes sought Indiana, as if he understood in what might be his very last moment how cruelly he had been deceived. He was never intended to be the high priest.

He was the sacrifice that the ancient spirit required to return to the physical world. The body that Horus would wake up in was Basil Smith.

Suddenly, Raymond cried shrilly, and fell forward with his arms outstretched, and Indiana and Finnley responded in the same split second. It was a desperate, suicidal action, the only one they had.

Indiana jumped on the two soldiers who stood beside him. His outstretched arms swept the men's feet. The fear of death gave him superhuman strength — with a quickness that astonished even him, he spun around and slammed one knee into the face of one man as he tried to stand up again. The second was a bit more nimble. But not nimble enough. He managed to get up on his knees before Indiana got to him, grabbing the barrel of his gun and pulling with all his might. The soldier responded instinctively, holding on to the weapon that Indiana was apparently trying to snatch. When Indiana responded with the opposite motion, pushing the barrel of the gun into his stomach, he opened his eyes and mouth and let out a loud groan. Even before he had fallen to the ground, Indiana spun around and leaped to Finnley's side, as he also had to deal with two enemies at once.

Nevertheless, they had probably lost the fight. The men who were under the total control of Basil — or *Horus*! — knew no pain or fear. The two that Indiana had defeated had already staggered back up, joining the others who were facing the furious — but mostly ineffective —

attacks of Indiana and Finnley.

At that moment, a scream tore through the air.

It was a sound like Indiana had never heard before, perhaps like none in this world had heard before — a cry so full of anger and rage, full of ancient hatred and endless disappointment, that Indiana fell to his knees, writhing as he heard it, and Finnley lurched and screamed in wild confusion.

The ground began to tremble. The eerie light flickered, changed its color and took on an almost garish green gray, and stones and dust again rained from the ceiling. With the crunching and rumbling, the portal that Basil and Raymond had passed through began to close again.

Indiana's eyes stared incredulously at the terrible events behind the doorway. Raymond was standing close to his father — but it was not his father. The grotesque *thing*, more than two yards tall, bore not the slightest resemblance to a human being. His head was that of a falcon, but the body had become something shapeless and pulsing, tearing the professor's clothes and moving frantically, trying to strip the old form from the flesh to take on a new one.

And it kept trying.

Basil's head had turned to that of the falcon god Horus, but the body simply could not manage the metamorphosis. The pulsating meat again lost its shape. It seemed to boil. Indiana once thought he recognized something like crippled, featherless wings, or like a hand with too many fingers... It was a horrible sight, one that conjured dismay in Indiana as he had never felt before.

The ground shook more violently. The walls began to wobble, and the barrage of stones from the ceiling grew more intense. One soldier was hit by a boulder and fell to the ground. Even Indiana felt a painful blow to the shoulder. It didn't register, though, because he continued to stare fascinated and horrified at the narrowing gap between the sides of the doorway.

Raymond had reached his father. He screamed continuously, but his cries were drowned out by the shrill screech of the misshapen god

— and suddenly the *thing* stretched out of two formless arms of different lengths, grabbed Raymond and dragged him toward itself with irresistible force.

Raymond screamed sharply and then stopped.

It was not over yet.

The monster let Raymond's lifeless body drop carelessly, then sat up and stared out at Indiana with hatred in its glowing eyes. With heavy, stomping steps, Horus moved closer to the gate, its falcon head stretching out, opening the terrible beak to grab the man who had done this to him and tear him apart. Indiana tried to move, but he couldn't: the eye of the dying god paralyzed him.

The gap narrowed further, but its movement was slow, so slow. Horus was going to cross the gate before it completely closed.

But he didn't.

Just before the doorway, he paused, as if there were an invisible line that was impossible to cross. It raged. As its body continued to change, it lost more and more strength, until it began literally to fall apart. The cry of the dying god was the pain of a being who had waited thousands of years, only now recognizing that its dream of freedom was not to be. It threw itself with all its might against the invisible barrier. It was unable to break through.

Indiana's gaze swept over the hollows where Basil had placed the statuettes. Two small figures were glowing in the same light as the hall behind the gate, but the third remained dark. It remained what it always had been: a lifeless thing that looked just like what it pretended to be…

With a thud, the gate closed again. And this time, Indiana knew, it would be for good.

* * *

Indiana had removed the two statues of Horus from the recesses where Basil had put them. The direct route back to the entrance had closed. They had taken Liz, who had fallen into a merciful unconsciousness, through the alternate path. The way back through the one thousand five hundred chambers was a gauntlet, in the truest sense of the word — but they had done it.

Basically, Indiana had never really doubted it. Fate could not be so cruel to let them survive all this, just to kill them at the last

moment with a falling stone or a room with no exit, where they'd die of thirst.

But he did feel a profound sense of relief when they finally exited the labyrinth and approached their vehicle. For the first time in hours, he felt he could breathe freely. They had been in a place where no man should ever set foot. And probably no man would ever enter again. After he had removed the statues, they discovered that it was no longer possible to open Basil's secret passage. The only way to get to the chamber of Horus now was through the one thousand, five hundred chambers of the labyrinth. And only one who possessed all three statues could open the last chamber — that of Horus.

Indiana would ensure that this couldn't happen again.

As much as it hurt him to say it — if need be, if he could find no safe place for the statues, with a heavy heart, he would destroy them himself. They had *seen* the resurrected Horus die, but was he really dead forever? When it came to gods, one could never be sure...

Liz groaned when he and Finnley carefully placed her in the back seat of the Land Rover, but she did not wake up.

Indiana gently placed his hand on her forehead. Her pulse was racing, and she was running a fever. Nevertheless, he was sure she'd get through it. Raymond had been right: she was tough.

"We must get to a doctor," Finnley murmured. They were the first words he had spoken since they had left the last chamber, and his voice was low and hoarse. His face was white as paper. "I hope that she pulls through. I wouldn't —"

He stopped — in a way that caused Indiana to look up in alarm. And a second later he realized why.

They were no longer alone. As silent as ghosts, a dozen monks had appeared around the car.

"What...?" murmured Finnley. His voice was shrill.

Panic flickered in his eyes.

"Don't worry," Indiana said quickly. "They won't hurt us. I guess they were following us the whole time." He punctuated his words with a soothing gesture, climbed backward out of the car and walked toward the men. After just a few seconds, he saw their leader — a man in a torn, gold-embroidered robe. Indiana was relieved when he realized that the old monk had not been killed in the massacre.

None of the monks spoke a word as Indiana joined them. No one moved — and still, from the eyes of the old monk, Indiana knew their

question. Silently, he reached into the pockets of his jacket, pulled out the two Horus statues and gave them to him. Then he turned around, went back to the car and reached behind the driver's seat to bring out a small package wrapped in cloth. He un-wrapped it to reveal the third statue.

Finnley's eyes went wide. "What... what does that mean?" he murmured, stunned.

"Basil had only *two* real statues," Indiana said. "This is the third."

"But he *had* three!" Finnley protested.

"No," Indiana said. "What Basil thought was the third statue was actually the copy that I took from the Cairo National Museum. He was way too obsessed with his plan to realize it. *This* is the true figure."

"So that's why that... *thing* could not leave the hall,"

murmured Finnley.

Indiana nodded. He sighed. "Yes. I guess that's what saved our lives." He smiled and again joined the old monk, handing him the statuette. "You must keep them in a safe place," he said. "They must never again fall into the wrong hands."

"That we will do, Dr. Jones," said the old man. "I give you my word."

"And for my part, I swear that I will not reveal the mysteries of the labyrinth to any man," Indiana said. Questioningly, he looked to Finnley.

"I promise, too," Finnley said nervously. "Besides —

who would believe *this story*?"

Indiana did not answer. He knew he could rely on Finnley. For a while he stood still, waiting as the monks turned around silently and disappeared, then he went back to the car, climbed behind the wheel and started the engine. Liz moved uneasily as he drove off, but stayed asleep.

"Do you think she... *saw* what happened to her father and Raymond?" asked Finnley.

"I hope not," Indiana said. Then he shook his head.

"No, I don't think so. She's had a severe shock."

"But what if she asks?" Finnley persisted.

"Then we'll tell her the truth," Indiana answered with a sigh. "She had a nightmare — just like the rest of us.

And that the nightmare is finally over."